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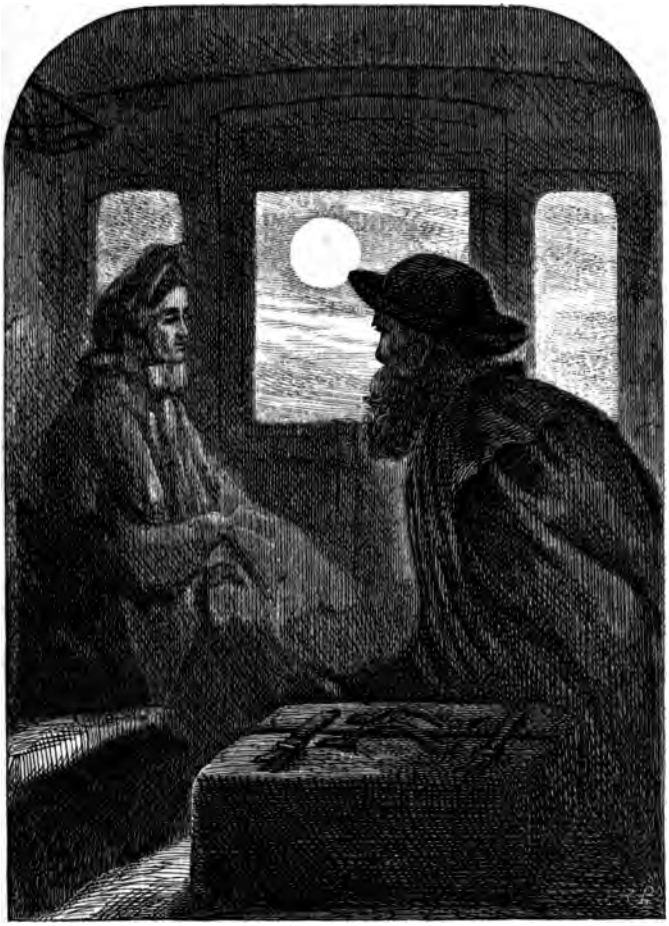
THE

MIDNIGHT JOURNEY

AND OTHER TALES



THE MIDNIGHT JOURNEY.

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AND OTHER TALES

(Reprinted from 'Chambers's Journal.')

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THE MIDNIGHT JOURNEY.

BY LEITCH RITCHIE.

I HAVE lived a very wandering life. When quite a boy, I was taken from school to be consigned to the care of a near kinsman in the West Indies. In two years this gentleman died insolvent, and I tried successively several of the greater islands without finding a permanent place for my foot. I next found my way to the Spanish Main, but in the company of loose and daring speculators, rather than in the regular mercantile employment for which I had been intended; and several years were passed in a course of adventure and vicissitude, many portions of which would seem too wildly improbable for romance. In the other division of the New World, I was carried by my wandering destiny along the whole of the Mexican range of coast, and passed nearly two years in California. In the course of this time I visited several of the islands both in the North and South Pacific, and at a subsequent period hunted the sea-otter,

with a crew composed chiefly of Aleutian savages, in the ocean that separates Asiatic from American Russia.

All this had done nothing for me in the way of fortune. Indeed, I cannot be said to have ever thought seriously of the future. Like the wild companions among whom my lot had been cast, I was satisfied with the bounties of the passing hour; spending gaily, whenever we had opportunity, the money earned at the constant risk of life and limb. But at length a circumstance occurred which made me think. When poring one day over an old newspaper in the cabin of an English ship, I observed with surprise and incredulity—at first manifested by a fit of laughter—that the world had not altogether forgotten the poor, friendless, reckless adventurer of the Pacific. A series of unexpected deaths, as it appeared, had taken place; and the boy who had been shipped away at such early years from his home and country, in the hope of securing for him in the New World a provision, which in the Old could only be the result, if it ever came at all, of the struggles of years, was now the heir of an independent property!

These particulars have nothing to do with an adventure (if it can be called an adventure) which I fell in with immediately on my return to England, and which I now sit down to sketch for the amusement of my new friends. But I give them in order to account for the wildness of certain hallucinations which beset me, and which would otherwise be considered merely an instance of bad taste, rather than traced to a habit of mind engendered by the extraordinary scenes that had formed my everyday life since the days of boyhood. Even the long homeward voyage had no effect in tranquillising my nerves; for it was a voyage of storm and other disaster, including hunger, and its frequent

concomitant, mutiny. When at length the white cliffs of my country rose upon the horizon, steeped in the mellowed sunlight of these temperate latitudes, I felt an unaccustomed yearning after repose. My unquiet bosom grew calm; my wild eyes filled with tears; and I called upon the winds to swell our lagging canvas, that I might flee away and be at rest.

What a contrast was my life now about to present! What a novelty was even the physical aspect of the country about to disclose to my eyes! How should I fall in with the measured tread of that calm and orderly population of which I was to form a unit? How could I even walk steadily upon the level roads and smooth fields that awaited me? Presently, as these inquiries crowded into my mind, there mingled with my new-born longings after rest a kind of misgiving that I was not fitted for its enjoyment; and as the night began to close dark and heavy around while we were nearing the coast, I felt almost happy in the idea that another day was to dawn before I should enter upon my new course of tame, quiet, methodical, prosaic existence.

But this interval was not destined to occur. As lights rose here and there upon the dark mass before us, in clustering groups, long lines, or solitary stars, they rekindled my excitement. The voices of the land called me from a hundred points, and my heart answered to the hail. It seemed an *adventure* to plunge into that world of shadows, studded with so many gems that sparkled without illumining; and in the morning, it would be an amusement to observe into what common forms the phantasmagoria of my imagination had resolved. A conveyance, I was told by the revenue officers who boarded us, would set out in two or three hours from a neighbouring town, towards the distant

part of the country which was my destination; and I suddenly determined to go on shore, and make as much progress on my journey as I could accomplish in the night.

On landing, I could form no distinct idea of the character of the country, for my vision was unable to penetrate more than a few yards around me. These few yards, however, were tame and civilised, just as I had expected; and being informed at the Customs' station that I should find the road good and direct towards the next town, I at once shouldered my knapsack—for my worldly goods were then packed in small compass—and set out on the few miles' walk. The wind was against me, and felt keener and colder than I had known it under the tropics; and by-and-by it came on to rain, and the drops dashed in my face as if they would have cut the skin. Altogether, my walk was somewhat uncomfortable; and although it was impossible to wander from a narrow road that was bounded on both sides by a thick hedge, blinded as I was by the rain, and confused by the gust, I found the way a little longer than I expected.

I at length reached the town. The streets were already deserted; not a sound was heard but the wind moaning through them; and as I passed between rows of lamps, of what seemed to me an unearthly brilliance, I could have supposed that I had entered some dead city of enchantment. After wandering on for a considerable distance, I at length reached an open door of what proved to be a house of entertainment; and having signified to the people what I wanted, and whither I was going, and desired to be called in time for the conveyance, I sat down to a substantial and not unwelcome meal. This was indeed rest. I was alone in the room: the house, like the street, was profoundly silent; and as the servant-woman glided in and out to attend to my

requirements, she seemed afraid to disturb by voice or foot-fall the repose of the scene. She at length left me, signifying that I should be called 'in time to start;' and while mechanically satisfying my appetite, I gave full reins to my excursive imagination.

It was still cold, although not late in the autumn; and in order to restore the circulation to my limbs, I drank a little spirits and water. This circumstance would not be worth mentioning; but my habits being strictly temperate, I am inclined to *hope* that I may thus in some measure account for a state of mind which I should be loath to describe as delirium. However this may be, I either fell asleep after supper, or into that trance-like reverie which can hardly be distinguished from a dream. I was still roaming by the cliffs of the Pacific, through the primeval forests of America, amid the breakers of Behring's Sea. I was still searching for gold (which had at one time been my occupation) among the mountains of the south-west, and listening to the wild legends of the place, as I paused at the opening of some tomb-like cavern, said by the natives to communicate, through the bowels of the earth, with lands beyond the ocean. But my reverie had not the effect of reality. I knew at the time that it was my imagination that thought, while my judgment watched its aimless gambols with a sense of languid amusement. Ever and anon, however, England mingled in my dream. From each loftier cliff, from the summit of each wilder wave, I saw spread out in the distant sea its green and level fields, bathed in the pale sunlight of the north, and slowly traversed with methodical steps by an industrious and orderly population.

I was at length suddenly awakened from my trance by the noise of heavy footsteps, clanging doors, and calling

voices; but so imperfectly awakened, that I have only a confused recollection of having been told that it was time to set out on my journey, of being flooded along the street in a hurrying crowd, and of having paid, in the midst of a scene of tumult, some money, which I understood was to be the price of my transport. I may have been partly asleep, and partly under the influence of the unaccustomed glass of spirits and water; yet, after all, this confusion of mind is perhaps not very surprising in a stranger from the wilds of the Pacific set suddenly down in the heart of a distant country, and in the midst of an entirely new form of society. But mark the sequel.

I was hardly seated in the public vehicle, when it rolled off, leaving the tumult behind in an instant. A female, in the corner opposite to mine, was the only other passenger; and by the light of a lamp which we passed now and then in the earlier part of the journey, I saw that she was young and fair, but pale, cold, mute, and passionless as a statue. Not a trace of excitement caught from the hurry and the crowd, or the romance of a midnight journey, was on that marble brow, or in those lovely but soulless eyes. They were fixed on mine, as her head leaned back, with a look which confounded me by its utter want of human sympathy; and then, having wandered for an instant over my foreign garb, and my knapsack, which lay on the seat beside me, they withdrew so coldly and lifelessly, that when a hand was protruded from her cloak, to arrange with listless motions its folds about her neck, and exhibited not one trace of blood in its long tapering fingers, that gleamed like snow in the darkness, I could have supposed her to be some preternatural being in whose custody I was travelling! There was no amusement without. We seemed to be

journeying between two shadows, the denser being the earth, and the rarer the heavens; and again and again I turned to look at my companion. Sometimes, though rarely, I met the dead eyes as before; but at length they closed, and she was all statue.

The form of the denser shadow without now began to change, being half disclosed by a pale gleam from above, which seemed to indicate the quarter of the sky where the moon lay under her pall of clouds. The shadow grew loftier and more rugged, and then appeared to come out in cliffs and heights. These presently began to close in upon our path; and the sound of our rushing wheels, before partially lost in the surrounding atmosphere, was converted, by the interruption, into groans and screams. On flew the vehicle, shrieking as it flew, and answered by the thousand voices of the rocks, as they gathered closer and closer, till they seemed to totter over our heads. Nor was this idea so absurd as you may suppose; for as I thrust my head in alarm out of the window, there was a yawning gulf before us, into which we were obviously hurrying.

Was I still in the midst of my dream? Was this the Gold-seeker's cave, through which my 'extravagant and erring spirit' was to be transported beneath the foundations of the sea? I had hardly time to ask myself the question, ere the screams and groans of the vehicle, becoming more agonised every instant, were broken by an unearthly yell, which quivered in the ear for more than a minute, and then, with a rush and a roar, received with a sound of mingled laughter and sobbing, we plunged madly into the abyss.

Onward—onward—onward we flew, through as dark and wild a cavern as ever disclosed to modern men the extinct

races of an earlier world. Sometimes a red and momentary gleam illumined, I knew not whence, our lonely path, and I saw the face of the living rock overhead jagged with stalactites, and its rugged sides dripping with water. On these occasions I turned a look of intense curiosity upon my companion. Sometimes her eyes were open, sometimes shut; but her manner remained as listless and impassive as ever. Sometimes her glance met mine, but it betrayed no trace of human emotion. She appeared to look on me as a portion of the material things before her, with which she claimed, and could feel, no sympathy. Sometimes her eye wandered to the window; but after a single glance, it returned as cold and unmoved as before. It was the same thing to her whether we were above or below the earth, whether we were flying upon the clouds or digging beneath the foundations of the sea; it made no change in her listless manner or reclining posture: she remained as cold, and pale, and mute, and passionless, and fair as ever.

How long this subterraneous course went on I cannot say; I lost account of time. We had set out from the mountains of Mexico, and for aught I knew, we were now beneath the Pacific, and destined to rise in the deserts of Australia. In fact, the Old World and the New were so strangely jumbled in my imagination, that I could not have determined, with any feeling of certainty, in which quarter of the globe our journey lay. All on a sudden, a wan, spectral light broke into the cave, and but for the wild absurdity of the supposition, I could have really supposed that I caught a glimpse of the moon emerging from her pall of clouds. This I *knew* to be impossible, although the other details of the scene were so terribly real, that I was sometimes fully persuaded I was awake! On, however, we rushed, in utter darkness as

before, and for so long a time, that, worn out and stupefied by the over-excitement, it was with a feeling of little more than languid curiosity I saw—not by the approach of light, but rather by a steady change in the darkness—that we neared the end of our subterranean career, and were at length vomited forth into the upper world.

I beheld nothing distinctly for several minutes. My companion was asleep, or at least motionless; and, as if controlled by some strange fascination, I felt my own eyes growing heavy; when, all on a sudden, the moon burst forth, and lighted up a scene of such surpassing splendour, that I uttered an involuntary cry of admiration. We were in a deep glen, or rather gorge, the sides of which appeared to be formed of majestic cliffs of white marble, hung here and there with a drapery of woods. The summits were inconceivably various in their outlines: sometimes representing castles and towers; sometimes battlemented steeps; sometimes fringes of tall trees, that held up their finger-like branches between us and the moonlight. In the distance, the ravine, at a place where it sunk sheer down from the base of a lofty mountain, was spanned by an aerial bridge, that appeared to me like a path by which the sons of God might have descended to visit the daughters of men. My cry had aroused the female statue, and she even raised her head for an instant; but there was nothing unnatural to *her* in this spectral show, and in another moment she leaned back in the carriage, although I could see her strange eyes gleaming upon me for some time through the gloom.

Onward we rushed through the gorge, now plunging into solemn woods, and now skimming along the extreme edge of steeps, from which I could see, through the tops of tangled

trees, the gleam of a torrent far below. But presently, as we appeared to be issuing through the narrow portal of the ravine into a more open country, the moon was again hidden, and a thicker shadow than before descended upon our path. At this moment I received an impression which I shall long remember, for its remarkable consistency with the scene. My eyes were attracted to the opposite window of our headlong vehicle by a sudden and momentary gleam of red light, accompanied by a sound like the sweep of a tempest, and —smile if you will at the superstition!—I beheld a crowd of spectral faces glaring in upon us for an instant, and then vanishing in the night.

After our egress from the enchanted valley, we appeared to descend gradually, but without diminishing our speed. It was too dark for any distinct observation of the nature of the country; but the air felt thick, chill, and damp, and it was obvious that we were gaining an extremely low level, with perhaps a marshy soil. But at length the struggling moon was able to throw a wan light upon the scene, and I saw that we were either crossing the sea, or traversing a flooded district. Water was around us as far as the eye could reach, studded here and there with small islands, each bearing a hut, a rick of corn, or a few solitary trees, in the midst of which we continued our career without appearing to disturb the slumbrous wave by our rushing wheels. It seemed as if we skimmed along the surface of the liquid expanse without touching it. At this part of the journey, the marble fingers again stole out, to draw closer the drapery about the marble chin: my companion apparently felt the chillness of the air, but it gave her no further trouble to find herself out of sight of the mainland.

Not the least extraordinary circumstance attending this

extraordinary journey, was the rapidity of transition from one level and from one character of scenery to another, without our receiving any distinct impressions from the act of climbing or descending. It may be, however, that the monotony of the water-course lulled my over-excited senses into a temporary oblivion; but at anyrate, the next change I perceived was the moon completely free from the imprisoning clouds, and her faint beams struggling with the first rays of the dawn. We were now rushing through a wild and rugged country, evidently of considerable elevation, with here and there the adjuncts of wood and water giving variety and interest to the scene. Suddenly, however, as I leaned out of the window to refresh my fevered brow with the morning air, I could perceive, by an appearance in the misty distance, that our journey was in all probability drawing to a close. A deep valley, if it would not rather prove to be a chasm in the mountains, extended at right angles with our course; and in order to pursue our career, it would now be necessary, instead of running, as we had hitherto done, pretty nearly as the crow flies, either to turn sharply away, or fling ourselves headlong over the steep.

It was with intense interest I watched the event; which became more and more puzzling, as I saw that there was no mass of houses giving indication of our having reached the goal. To turn away along the brink of the valley, would be contrary to the whole scheme of our journey; and as we approached nearer and nearer, it was obvious that to plunge into that gulf of tumbling shadows, on which the gray light of the dawn had as yet but little influence, was entirely out of the question. My agitation appeared to arouse in some measure even my strange companion; at least she leaned languidly forward to give a single

glance out of the window, and then returned to her marble repose.

How I wished that I could see more clearly!—but perhaps the wish was imprudent. Nearer and nearer we came to the edge of the chasm; deeper and more sudden appeared the precipice to fling itself into the misty gloom; swifter and wilder flew the wheels of the desperate vehicle: we are at hand; we are on the brink: my eyes closed—but not till I had seen that we were no longer on the firm earth. We had darted out into space, like an arrow from the bow. We had swerved neither to the right nor the left, neither upwards nor downwards. We had scorned the depths of the valley, just as we had laughed at the impediments of cliff and mountain; and now we appeared to be skimming through the air, with the same indomitable will, the same headlong impulse, with which we had thundered through the living rock!

The first edge of the sun arose as we flew, and the shadows of the valley disappeared. A beautiful and fertile plain stretched far beneath us both to right and left, diversified by woods and waters, farms and cottages, fields and gardens; and here and there we could see men and women, horses and oxen, coming forth to their daily employment. We were nothing to them. We did not belong to their world. A face may have been turned up for an instant, a finger extended; but the peasant returned the next moment to his cheerful toil, without a thought of whence we had come or whither we were going.

We had left this scene long behind before my bewildered senses revived; but at length I was aroused by the stopping of the vehicle, and I found myself suddenly in the midst of a crowd and bustle similar to that which I had witnessed at

our departure. The mysterious female at once started into life. Her manner thawed; her complexion lost its marbly tint, and became human; and her beautiful face was lighted up with smiles.

'Give your ticket!' said she, teaching me by her example, as a functionary came to the door.

'What is this?' said I. 'Was it all real? Where have we been? How have we come?'

'I see,' replied she, smiling, 'you are a foreigner, and do not take well to the rail. It is very dull and stupid, I must needs confess, but I usually manage to sleep a little. However, I shall not find it quite so tame to-morrow when returning in daylight.'

'You return to-morrow?'

'Yes; I have only come down to dine to-day with some friends, who have made up a little party for a trip to America to see the Falls.'

'You do not go with them?'

'Alas, no! I am such a weak creature—so childishly nervous; and they say Niagara is *so* odd! In your country, too, I daresay there are wonderful sights, and strange adventures, and all sorts of things to keep one awake. Here we only spin cotton! Good-morning.' And with a kindly smile, and a graceful bend, the young lady tripped away, and was lost among the crowd.

Such was my first journey after my return to England; and it served to dissipate many delusions. I found every-day life a poem, a romance, compared with which the adventures of the Pacific are tame and commonplace. Even the cotton manufactories, so disdainfully referred to by my fellow-traveller, present scenes unparalleled for wonder and excitement, danger and hairbreadth 'scapes. But the magic

with which my countrymen are surrounded is *their own*. A tunnel through a mountain, or a viaduct across a valley, is no marvel to them, because they know the amount and kind of labour which produced it, and the sum of money it cost. For my part, my impressions are as yet free from such associations, and I still walk about like a man in a dream. I went abroad in search of fortune, and found only danger and toil; I returned home for repose, and find nothing but headlong hurry and wild excitement. Science has changed the face of the world; and I am as a man called up by enchantment from the sleep of ages to find himself a stranger upon the earth.

BENITO, THE HORSE-TAMER.

THE traveller in Mexico, while threading his way through the dense forests of the country, or crossing its scorching deserts and vast savannahs, not unfrequently meets with a party of *vaqueros*—those indomitable horsemen—riding fearlessly along, their lassos coiled on their saddles, conducting a train of furious-looking horses to market, or preparing for a chase among the numerous herds of wild cattle which roam in thousands over the broad grassy plains. In one of my journeys across the sandy regions in the northern part of the country, I arrived, after encountering fearful privations, at the establishment of Don Ramon, to which I had some weeks before been invited.

The farm, if such it can be called, which was devoted principally to the rearing of horses, was situated in the centre of a small district, whose fertility, in striking contrast to the surrounding waste of sand, was maintained by the presence of an abundant and inexhaustible spring, which gushed from the soil at the foot of a group of stately ash-trees. The surface of the smooth green turf was dotted

here and there with clusters of sumachs and gum-trees, while immense troops of cattle, horses, and sheep were galloping or moving slowly across the enclosure, to drink at one of the little water-courses which were led in all directions over the surface of the ground. At a short distance beyond stood the house, serving at once as fortress, church, and dwelling, in the form of a huge parallelogram, flanked by long rows of stables and low buildings, in which the numerous domestics were lodged.

Fastening my horse to a post in the court-yard, which I was surprised to find deserted, I crossed to an open door, whence a voice issued in monotonous tones. It was the chaplain reciting prayers; and being Saturday evening, the whole household were present, in accordance with the old Spanish custom. Among them were two females, whom, as well as could be ascertained through their *rebozos*, or veils, I took to be Don Ramon's wife and daughter. The latter absorbed the whole attention of a young man who entered soon afterwards and knelt on the floor among the others. A tedious interval followed, when at length the last response was chanted, and the whole assembly rose to their feet and dispersed.

We had scarcely exchanged greetings when supper was announced. The head of the long narrow table was occupied by Don Ramon, the chaplain, and myself; the remaining space was filled by a crowd of servants of both sexes, who, with patriarchal simplicity, ate at the same table with their masters. I was astonished and disgusted at the profusion of dishes: excepting a fine piece of venison, the others consisted of fowls dressed in an ocean of pimento sauce, or buried under a mountain of rice, from which exhaled an insufferable odour of saffron. Besides these,

there were enormous masses of half-cold beef, surrounded by rancid olives, dried raisins, and indescribable vegetables: all rapidly disappeared, however, before the appetites of the hungry household. The absence of liquid was remarkable; but in Mexico no one drinks during dinner.

The capacious flagons were brought in, and each person drank in turn, when Don Ramon informed me that I had arrived at a fortunate juncture, for that the next day would be the *herradero*, or annual counting and marking of the horses and cattle. The supper was eaten to celebrate the occasion: the meal generally consists of a cup of chocolate only; and to this cause was owing the absence of the ladies from the table.

It was scarcely daylight the next morning when I rose, and made my way to the apartment in which prayers had been chanted the previous evening. Don Ramon, his daughter Maria-Antonia, and the chaplain, were already assembled; the horses were waiting saddled at the door, and we immediately mounted. We rode to the edge of the wood, and waited the arrival of the herd which the vaqueros were driving in. A confused noise was heard; the ground trembled; and suddenly, from every avenue of the wood rushed a serried column of cattle and horses, bellowing, neighing, and throwing their heels into the air, as the daring vaqueros hurled their lassos from the rear. Our horses began to chafe, excited by the tumult; all at once the chaplain, letting his hood fall on his shoulders, galloped off at full speed after the torrent. His example was instantly followed by Maria-Antonia, who, with streaming hair as her horse flew over the ground, resembled a beautiful Amazon rushing to the charge. Don Ramon in turn spurred his horse to the rush; and whether or no, I was forced to join

the tumultuous cavalcade. In a few minutes we reached the *torils*, or enclosures into which the animals were driven. At first, all was an indescribable confusion of kicking, leaping, roaring, and neighing. By-and-by, however, the impotent struggles ceased, and the herradero commenced. Large fires of wood had been kindled on iron tripods placed at the entrance of the toril; the irons placed in the glowing coals had become red-hot; and the vaqueros, after a few minutes of repose, proceeded to their rude and dangerous task.

Looking over the throng with an experienced eye, no sooner did they see a horse, bull, or heifer without their master's mark on the skin, than with a cast of the lasso, they invariably secured the beast they wanted, amidst the confused multitude of horns and heads, which opened as the animal was drawn out of the enclosure. A second vaquero then approached, and throwing his noose carelessly on the ground, made his horse leap, and in an instant the lassoed animal was stretched on the earth. Before he had time to recover from his surprise, the red-hot iron was hissing upon his flank, from which arose a little cloud of smoke; the thongs were then loosened, and the trembling beast galloped off to the woods. Very soon the dust and vapour arising from the *mêlée* formed so thick a cloud that we could scarcely distinguish what was going on within; sometimes a colt, mounted for the first time, leaped madly from the throng, with a vaquero on his back, striving in vain to escape from his rider and the pain of his wound.

The breaking-in of a horse is the most dangerous part of the vaquero's business. Their manner of proceeding is, after the animal has been branded, to let it rise to its feet, if not too restive, when a leathern band is placed before its

eyes; and, deprived of light, it generally stands quiet while the heavy saddle is strapped on. A horse-hair rope (*bozal*) is then passed over the nostrils, performing the double office of snaffle-bit and bridle. The vaquero, having assured himself of the security of the saddle, buckles on his enormous spurs, leaps on the creature's back, and removes the band from before its eyes. For an instant, the horse hesitates, but soon the sight of the plains in which he has been accustomed to roam at liberty, makes him burst into a furious neigh, and try every means to shake off his burden. The saddle is too tightly strapped to give way; he then tries to bite the rider's legs; but a pull at the bozal, which presses over his nostrils, makes him desist. He then describes immense curves, throwing out prodigious kicks, and standing almost upright on his hind-legs, endeavours to dislodge the horseman by a sudden spring forwards. The rider, however, remains immovable in his seat, and in turn becomes the assailant. Two strokes of the spurs produce a cry of surprise and pain, followed by a succession of prodigious bounds; but the rider still maintains his position. The spurs are now worked without a pause; the terrified animal, as a last resource, tries to dash himself with his tormentor headlong against a tree; and failing this, finds it impossible to disobey the rider's will—in a word, he is broken—tamed. The vaquero takes breath, lights a cigar, and straps his still humid saddle on the back of another horse, and is ready to go through a similar trial.

We were seated on a temporary stage, erected under the shade of a group of sumachs; Don Ramon asked me if we had such horsemen in Europe. Instead of replying, I inquired whether accidents did not sometimes happen in these equestrian struggles.

'Now and then,' he answered. 'Two of my fellows were lately killed by the *Endemoniado*, and they have taken care not to bring him to the herradero.'

'And who is this Endemoniado?' I asked.

'A horse which has been mounted only twice: the first rider was trampled to pieces; the skull of the other was split against the branchless tree that you see yonder. These, however, are family affairs; the vaqueros and horses are both mine, and both have a perfect right to kill themselves if they please.'

The vaqueros began to utter excuses, when a man arrived unexpectedly, dragging an unwilling horse: it was the Endemoniado. The pain caused by a hair-rope, which the new-comer had succeeded in passing round his upper lip, extorted a sullen obedience. The appearance of the animal justified its name—*Demoniac*, or *Possessed;* its colour was dark sorrel, with white legs, signs of a vicious temper. Its ears were pointed forwards, its long mane hung down in disorder, and every time it stamped, the hoof rung with a metallic sound against the pebbles. A look of alarm went through the attendants as Don Ramon asked: 'Now, my braves, which of you is going to mount the Endemoniado for the honour of the establishment? It will not do to let a horse boast of having frightened us all.'

Not a voice was raised in reply: presently some one called out the name of Benito Goya.

The individual signalised, whom I recognised as the young man who had fixed his regards so attentively on Don Ramon's daughter during the devotions of the previous evening, stepped before his chief, and replied: 'If you think, senor, that I ought to get myself killed for the

honour of the place, I am quite ready to do whatever you may order.'

A supplicating look from his daughter made Don Ramon hesitate; at last he rejoined: 'I have no right to order you to kill yourself; but if you will risk the adventure, I give you full and entire liberty.'

'It is well,' answered Benito, and turned away to make preparations for saddling the Endemoniado—no easy task; for, as if anticipating the intentions of the vaqueros, the horse began to kick furiously. A lasso was passed round the pastern of the left hind-leg, and passed tightly round the animal's breast, by which means the leg was drawn up close to the belly. The right fore-leg was bent upon itself by a similar process; and in this state of equilibrium the horse remained motionless. Benito threw the heavy saddle on the animal's back, drew the girth tight, and then sat down upon the sand to fix on his spurs. I looked at Maria-Antonia: she sat motionless, but her large dark eyes, widely opened, glittered strangely in her pallid features, and her laboured breathing betrayed her emotion. Don Ramon himself seemed frightened, and for a moment I hoped he would withdraw the permission which exposed an intrepid young man to almost certain death; but he said nothing. When Benito had fastened his spurs, the horse's legs were released, and the band of leather placed before his eyes. Yet, although held by the rope which wrung his lip, the tremendous plunging of the Endemoniado prevented all attempts to mount. He was made to kneel down; and two vaqueros, biting each one an ear of the animal, held him for a moment in this position. Benito leaped on his back, and in a firm voice desired the others to 'let go.'

The attendants rushed out of the way to the rear, while

the Endemoniado leaped upwards, as though lifted by the release of a hidden spring. Thanks to the leathern band which blinded him, he stood at first trembling upon his legs, with distended nostrils and quivering body. Benito profited by this brief respite to secure himself in the saddle; then leaning forward, he removed the covering from before the animal's eyes. A contest truly wonderful then commenced between the man and the horse. Startled by the sudden light dazzling his bloodshot eyes, his tangled mane bristling with rage, the impetuous beast uttered a terrible neigh, and, recoiling upon himself, bounded towards every quarter of the compass. Benito, without appearing disturbed by these efforts, held himself upon the defensive, defeating the horse's attempts to bite by severe kicks upon the mouth. Disappointed in his object, the Endemoniado went suddenly down upon his haunches. The spurs were now plied; but instead of rising to his feet, the horse fell violently over upon his back. A cry of alarm broke from the spectators; it was, however, only the pommel of the saddle that struck the ground: Benito, foreseeing the shock, had leaped rapidly off. An instant afterwards, enveloped in a cloud of dust, the daring horse-tamer was seen to remount on the contrary side to that fixed by the laws of equitation, at the same moment that the bewildered animal rose again to his feet with renewed neighings. The vaquero, in turn, appeared beside himself with rage. For the first time in his life he had been thrown off. Burning to wipe off the disgrace, he ploughed the creature's flanks incessantly with his formidable spurs, while, with a tight hand upon the hair snaffle, he rained a shower of blows upon the bruised hide of the Endemoniado. Neither side as yet could be said to have the advantage; and after a few minutes more of this

desperate struggle, the two antagonists remained for an instant motionless. A burst of applause rang from every quarter; and whether the vaquero was flattered by the movement, or wished to excite still further admiration, he profited by the brief interval to draw a long narrow knife from its place in the lacing of his boot.

'Hollo!' exclaimed Don Ramon, whose feelings were excited when the life of a horse appeared to be at stake; 'is the fellow going to murder the Endemoniado?'

A flash of indignation glowed in the dark eyes of Maria-Antonia at the supposition that the man whom she had distinguished with her favour should prove a coward, followed by a proud smile at the sight of Benito, who, with reckless temerity, leaned forward and cut the bozal in two, leaving himself thus, without any check or hold, at the mercy of an untamable beast. Finding his nostrils relieved from the pressure of the snaffle, the Endemoniado gave a loud snort, shook his long mane, and rushed madly towards the branchless tree before spoken of. Such was the impetuosity of his start, that no one doubted of his destruction against the obstacle standing in his way; nor did there appear any chance of the rider avoiding the same fate. Another stride, and the contest would be terminated; when, just as the Endemoniado was about to make the final spring, Benito, taking off his broad-brimmed hat, stretched out his arm and covered the animal's eyes. The horse recoiled in alarm; and we had then the extraordinary spectacle of a horseman guiding an unbroken steed without a bridle: the latter started in terror from side to side, according as the hat covered one eye or the other. In this way the animal passed before our seat, and a look from the maiden repaid the vaquero for his successful hardihood: his

handsome features, animated by the consciousness of triumph, justified the maiden's choice. The Endemoniado was breathless and disconcerted at the unexpected resistance offered to him; but, roused anew by Benito, scampered off in the direction of the forest. We followed him with our eyes for some minutes as he swayed about like a reed under the prodigious strides of the animal, which seemed to devour the distance, and soon lost sight of him. A few cavaliers started after him; but such was his speed, that they soon gave up the useless pursuit.

It is unnecessary to repeat all the commentaries that attended the vaquero's disappearance. By some he was regarded as lost, notwithstanding his first triumph; for one of the Endemoniado's former victims had also escaped the fatal tree, and was afterwards found, far from the farm, trampled to death; others, however, were inclined to augur more favourably of the horse-tamer's skill. But after some time spent in idle speculation as to the fate of their comrade, they began in turn to display their powers and agility by a thousand feats of horsemanship: the thought of the absent vaquero, however, prevented my feeling interested in the exercises. An expression of the deepest anguish was imprinted on the beautiful features of Don Ramon's daughter. In vain her father besought her to retire: her looks remained fixed upon the place where Benito had disappeared, while her hands crushed convulsively the sumach flowers that hung around. More than an hour passed in this way; the sun rose higher and higher, and the landscape began to droop under the scorching heat. At length a long-drawn sigh escaped from the young girl's lips, which again resumed their rosy tint; an inexpressible joy beamed from her face, for a light cloud of dust seemed to be

approaching far in the distance, and her heart told her who it was yet hidden behind the cloud. Benito, in fact, was coming, swift as the wind: the vaqueros suspended their exercises, and had scarcely time to form a double line to receive their victorious comrade. One glance was sufficient to shew that the Endemoniado was at last broken; with panting sides, dimmed eyes, his hind-quarters stained with a coating of dusty sweat, it was easy to see that the redoubtable animal was now obedient to the vivid terror inspired by his rider. The latter, with a countenance inflamed, and furrowed here and there by long scratches, his hair in disorder, his clothes in tatters, shewed all the signs of a dearly-bought victory. At the moment that the Endemoniado arrived opposite to our stage, Benito leaned suddenly backwards, uttered a cry, and the horse stopped short: his conqueror's voice now sufficed for his guidance. A general hurrah then arose from all the vaqueros; while Benito, with the grace of a finished courtier, bent respectfully from his saddle, as though to lay the homage of his victory at Maria-Antonia's feet. New acclamations followed; and while a mixture of embarrassment, pride, and joy tinged the maiden's beautiful features, a bunch of sumach flowers fell into the vaquero's hands. The young man could scarcely contain his emotion; he turned pale, stammered, and, as if powerless against a flower thrown by the hand of a woman, the resolute cavalier trembled in his saddle.

Some hours afterwards, when the work of the herradero was completed, I was returning alone to the house, when I met one of the vaqueros.

'Agree, Senor Cavalier,' he said, addressing me, 'that Benito Goya is a happy mortal, for, unless I deceive

myself, we shall have him for a new master before long.'

'It appears to me,' I replied, 'that he will only receive his deserts.'

THE LOST PORTRAIT.

BY MRS CROWE.

'*Écoutez!*—listen!' said Monsieur Herbois to his companion; 'there is that divine voice again!'

'*Mais c'est une voix d'enfant!*—it is a child!' returned Monsieur Michelet.

'Yes, it is the voice of a child; but what a voice!' exclaimed Herbois, standing still, and holding the other by the arm, in order to arrest his steps also; 'so pure, so sweet, and even so steady; and what a perfect intonation! Did you ever hear anything so enchanting?'

'It is very remarkable, certainly, for a child,' replied Michelet. 'It proceeds from this cottage; let us go round to the door and inquire about her.'

'*Doucement!*—softly! Come this way a bit,' said Herbois, laying his finger on his lip, and drawing his friend in an opposite direction.

The cottage from which this sweet voice proceeded stood

alone in a valley of the Apennines, not far from the town of Spoleto; and the two strangers, who had approached it from behind, now retreated the way they had come. 'The truth is,' continued Herbois, 'it was to hear that voice I sent for you from Rome.'

'Then I think you might let me hear a little more of it,' replied Michelet.

'I hope we shall hear a good deal more of it,' answered Herbois with a mysterious nod of the head. 'What do you say to carrying her off with us to Paris?'

'With all my heart,' replied Michelet: 'that voice, well cultivated, will be a fortune. What friends has she? Will they give her up?'

'That is the difficulty,' answered Herbois; 'and here it is I want your assistance. You must know that it was about three months since, on my way to Naples, that I first heard that voice. The day was cold, and whilst they were waiting for the horses at Spoleto, I had walked forward to warm myself; when suddenly, as I passed near this spot, my ears were arrested by these delicious tones. For some minutes I stood transfixed with delight and surprise; and as I was instantly struck with the immense advantages to be derived from the possession of the child, I was about to enter the cottage for the purpose of making inquiries, and opening a negotiation, when the vetturino overtook me, and I was obliged to continue my journey. On my arrival at Naples, however, I wrote to old Martinelli, who, by-the-bye, has given up teaching, and retired to end his days at Spoleto; which he left, some sixty years ago, a beggar-boy without shoes or stockings, in order to make his livelihood by singing through the streets. Well, I wrote requesting him to make inquiries about the girl and her friends, and

to find out on what terms they would give her up; not doubting, from their apparently mean circumstances, that they would be willing enough to resign her on such an advantageous speculation. But I had reckoned without my host.'

'You offered a sum down?'

'I offered a hundred crowns; at least I authorised Martinelli to do so, if he thought fit. But it appears that the grandfather of the girl had once before received an application of the same kind, and had rejected it with such indignation, that Martinelli said it would be of no use in the world to think of it: the old man being in the first place devotedly fond of the child; and in the next, having, for some family reasons, an insuperable objection to her going on the stage.'

'How are we to get her then?' returned Michelet.

'There's no way but stealing her that I know of,' returned Herbois.

'Stealing her!' echoed the other, looking rather grave.

'It's all for her own good, you know,' answered Herbois. 'Isn't it much better that that beautiful voice should be cultivated, and that she should make her fortune, and the fortunes of her family too, than that she should languish here for the rest of her life in poverty and obscurity?'

'Well, perhaps it is,' answered Michelet, whose notions of right and wrong were apt to be a little confused as well as those of his friend. In short, they were both *entrepreneurs* for the French opera, and as their ideas ran but in one channel, they did very honestly believe that no destiny could equal that of a *prima donna* in the great European theatres.

Finding, as he had expected, that his friend threatened

no very vigorous opposition to his nefarious project, Herbois now set about explaining to him the plan he had formed for its execution. Whilst they are discussing this question, we will introduce our readers to the inhabitants of the cottage.

Giuseppe Marabini was the possessor of a small vineyard, which had been in his family, and descended from father to son, for several generations. He was thus a proprietor, and raised somewhat above the degree of a peasant, although the produce of this little patrimony was not sufficient to exempt him from a necessity for the closest economy. Fortunately, however, he had no numerous family to provide for; one little girl being the only fruit of his union with Paula Batta, a young girl of the village, who brought him no dowry but a good temper, a pretty face, and a very sweet voice; which last qualification was not the least of her attractions to Giuseppe; and it was much to the satisfaction of both parents that they found the young Paulina had inherited this endowment. The child sang like a nightingale, and being also very pretty, she was the delight of her father and mother. By the time she was fifteen, these attractions, combined with the additional one of her being the heiress of the little vineyard, had brought half the young peasants of the neighbourhood to her feet. But Paulina did not care for them, and was in no hurry to be married; indeed, she frequently declared to her young companions that she did not mean to marry at all, for she was quite sure she should never be so happy as she was with her father and mother; and she remained inexorably fixed in this opinion till she was nearly sixteen, when the arrival of Marco Melloni, her cousin, entirely changed her views on the subject. Marco was the son of her mother's sister,

Teresa, and had quitted home at an early age in the quality of page to a lady of rank. He had since risen to some higher grade of service; and the family he then lived with being at Rome, he had taken the opportunity of visiting his relations.

Marco was a very different person from the suitors that Paulina had found it so easy to reject. He had seen the world; his manners and conversation were quite polished and fashionable; he talked of Paris, and Vienna, and London; of concerts, operas, and balls; and, moreover, he wore very fine clothes: and Paulina soon began to perceive that her inexorable resolution to lead a single life had been somewhat prematurely announced.

The gallant Marco of course fell in love with his pretty cousin, and when, at the end of his fortnight's holiday, he returned to Rome, he carried with him her promise to become his wife on his next visit, provided her father and mother did not object to the match; which, however grieved to lose their daughter, they did not think they had any good grounds for doing. So their consent being gained, and everything arranged, Marco returned to claim his bride before his master and mistress quitted Rome; and then carried her off with him to the north.

Now, unfortunately, although Paulina sang like an angel, she could not so much as write her name; so that the separation between herself and her parents was entire. For the first few months, indeed, Marco occasionally wrote them a line to say they were well; and in one of his letters he mentioned that the count, his master, was so charmed with Paulina's fine voice, that he had undertaken to provide her with lessons in singing, which pleased and flattered the good people very much. Gradually, however, this little

link between the parents and their child dropped; and many a sigh and tear it cost the former that, owing to the travelling propensities of Marco's employers, they had no means of gaining intelligence of her, even through the intervention of the scribes to be found at Spoleto: they did not know where to address a letter. Some years had passed in this state of uncertainty and privation, when one day the vetturino, who was weekly in the habit of passing that way, drew up his horses at their door, and handed out of the coach a lady extremely elegant in her appearance and attire, but apparently in very bad health. He then lifted out a child, and having set it and their luggage down at the door, he mounted his seat and drove away again; whilst Paula and Giuseppe stood at the window watching these unusual proceedings, and wondering what was to come next. A mistake it was of course; for what could so fine a lady want with them?

Meanwhile, the stranger having watched the carriage till it had passed a corner, and was out of sight, turned towards the door, which was open, and entered the house; whereupon the two old people, half in hope and half in fear, advanced to meet her; and when she lifted her veil, they saw it was their daughter; but so faded, so changed, so sad, that whether to rejoice or weep, as they embraced her, they knew not. For her part, poor soul, tears were the only expression that she was capable of, or which suited her mingled feelings of joy and grief; and without being able to utter a word, she sank into a chair, and shed them freely; whilst the child, with wonder painted in its large dark eyes, stood staring at the scene.

As soon as the parents had recovered from their surprise, they gave their daughter the tenderest welcome, and sought

by every means in their power to relieve her mental afflictions, and minister to her bodily comforts. But poor Paulina had returned with ruined health, and 'a broken and contrite heart;' and the only consolation she seemed capable of receiving, was the promise made by her parents to take charge of her child, and devote themselves to its welfare. 'Let her live with you, father; if she must marry, if she will marry, let it be to some one here on the spot: never let her leave her home: and, above all things, if she should inherit a voice—I fear she will, for she sings already—never let it be cultivated! Let her sing to please you, let her voice echo amongst her native hills; but oh, never, never within the walls of a theatre!' Such were her constant prayers and injunctions from the day she arrived till the day she breathed her last breath in their arms, which was just three months after they had seen her descend from the coach at their door. From that moment, Nina—so the little girl was called—became the darling of their hearts. They brought her up in the same simple way in which they had brought up her mother; indeed, they knew of no other. She helped to do the house-work and to tend the vines; and although inheriting more than her mother's beauty, and a voice almost unparalleled in sweetness and power, she could neither read nor write. They had already fixed their eyes on a young peasant of the neighbourhood to be her husband, when she was old enough; which would be in five years from the period at which our story commences, for she was now between ten and eleven years of age.

'Wife, wife!' said Giuseppe, as he approached the cottage an evening or two after the conversation between Herbois and Michelet, 'why are you sitting out so late?—Nina, you

should make your grandmother go to bed; you know she is not well.'

'Grandmother wouldn't,' answered Nina. 'I did ask her.'

'The cool air is so pleasant,' said Paula, rising with her husband's assistance; 'and I don't think I shall enjoy it many more evenings, for I grow weaker and weaker.'

'The more reason for your not sitting out in the chill,' returned Giuseppe. 'Come along in.' And almost angry at her imprudence, he led her into the house.

'The only thing that concerns me,' said Paula, after a pause, 'is to think how you will be able to take care of Nina when I am gone.'

'What do you mean?' said Giuseppe impatiently; for although he feared that Paula was really very ill, he could not bear to have his apprehensions confirmed.

'She is now approaching an age in which she will want me more than ever, just as I am going to be taken from her,' continued Paula.

'I 'll go and call her in,' said Giuseppe, looking towards the window, through which, although it was dark, they could see Nina leaning over the railing that separated their little garden from the road, whilst her sweet voice resounded in their ears as she chanted her evening hymn to the Virgin.

'Leave her a little; she is very well where she is, and she likes to be out of doors; besides, I meant to speak to you about her, husband, for you must prepare yourself for what is to happen. I know I cannot live long;' and therefore, much to the distress of the old man, Paula entered into the subject of her own approaching decease, giving him her directions and advice with regard to the future management of their beloved grandchild.

'Hark!' said he in the course of the conversation; 'who can that be playing the flute so charmingly?'

'It's beautiful!' said Paula, who loved music as well as her husband.

'Listen, grandmother—listen!' cried Nina, running up to the door.

'Yes, my child, we hear,' returned Paula.—'I only hope her love of music may not lead her into any mischief,' she continued. 'That scapegrace Pietro—I suppose that is his flute—is endeavouring to make up to her; but you must not let him;' and then, resuming the former subject, she entered at length into her views of what would be best for the happiness of their beloved charge. 'It's time she was in now, though,' said she, when the conversation was concluded. 'You had better call her.'

'Nina!' cried Giuseppe, going to the door; 'Nina, child, come in. Why do you stay out so late?'

But Nina did not answer.

'She is gone after that flute: it's Pietro's flute, depend on it; and he has enticed her out that he may whisper nonsense into her young ears. I don't like that lad. Hark! I hear a carriage; I hope the child is not out in the road.'

'I'll go and fetch her in,' said Giuseppe, proceeding towards the gate; but as she was not there, he opened it, and went upon the road. It being now so dark that he could not see above a yard or two on either side, he stood still and called, but Nina did not answer. Then he walked a little one way, and a little the other, still calling 'Nina! Nina!' but still no Nina answered; upon which he re-entered the house to fetch his stick; and whilst he and his wife vowed vengeance against Pietro for enticing the

child away, he directed his steps towards the cottage inhabited by that gay deceiver's mother, whither he did not doubt she was gone, as she had occasionally done before, bewitched by Pietro's musical accomplishments.

But, alas! Nina was not there; nor had it been Pietro's flute they had heard, that was clear, for the boy was lying in bed with a hurt leg. Who, then, was the musician that had enticed her away? Nobody could tell. The old man passed the night in seeking her all round the neighbourhood; Paula passed it in tears and prayers. Vain tears —vain prayers! Nina was seen in the valley no more! All that could be learned was, that the vetturino, who knew her well by sight, from so often passing the door, had seen a carriage with post-horses near Florence, in which sat two gentlemen and a little boy, whose face struck him as bearing a remarkable resemblance to Nina. The child seemed to know him too, for he had started up and put his head out of the window; but the gentlemen pulled him back, and drew up the glass. The man promised to make inquiries when he returned to Florence; but he could learn nothing: so many strangers visited that city, that the impression made by each was too evanescent to be retained.

For some weeks after this cruel misfortune, Paula languished between life and death, and then expired, bidding Giuseppe never to resign his search after their lost darling. 'Seek her in the great cities,' said she: 'they have stolen her for her voice.' When she was dead, and Giuseppe had laid her in the earth, he sold his cottage and his vineyard, and with the proceeds in his pocket, he set out with a wallet on his back and a stick in his hand, to traverse the earth in search of his grandchild.

Seven years had elapsed—Pietro was married and had two children; the cottage where these scenes had transpired was pulled down; the vineyard was a vineyard no longer; and the sorrows and distresses of their former owners had become a tradition in the neighbourhood, when one day a stranger arrived to inquire for Giuseppe Marabini. But no one could give him any intelligence: Giuseppe had gone away, nobody knew whither, and had never been heard of since his departure. But although these worthy people could give no intelligence themselves, they were not the less desirous of obtaining some from the traveller. They wanted to know whence he came, who sent him, and whether he could tell them what had become of Nina. But it was in vain they surrounded and questioned him; he evidently came to make inquiries, not to answer them; and not a word could they extract to satisfy their curiosity. When they were assured of the hopelessness of their endeavours, they drew aside from him, in order to discuss the question by themselves, whilst he mounted his horse, and rode away as he came.

On that very same day, a poor old man was treading heavily and sadly along the road between Dover and London. His clothes were worn and shabby, his tall spare figure was bowed by age and sorrow, his face was thin and wan, and his long white hair fell almost to his shoulders; he helped himself along by the aid of a stick, and under his arm he carried an old violin, which he ever and anon stopped to play when he arrived at a farm-house or a village. Gradually toiling on from day to day, he at length reached the metropolis; and as he could not speak a word of English, and was at a loss in what direction to seek a lodging, he set himself down upon a door-step to rest and

deliberate; and after a little while, in hopes of attracting the attention of the charitable, he commenced playing on his instrument. Presently a window was thrown up above his head, and two fair young faces looked out.

'That is the very tarantella I have been longing for!' exclaimed one.

'It 's the very same that Miss Dallas played, I declare,' cried the other. 'O what fun! Now we 'll get it; and she shall have the pleasure of hearing us play it the very next time we meet.'

'How delightfully savage she will be, after tossing up her head, and telling us she never gave copies!' said the first; whereupon, having called to the old man not to go away, they rang the bell, and desired the servant to take him into the dining-room.

'We want you to give us the music of that tarantella,' said they to him; 'of course we will pay you for it.'

'*Perdona!*' said the old man, shaking his head.

'Ah—you are a foreigner?' said they, addressing him in French, which he understood enough to comprehend them; and on learning what they wanted, he said he should be too happy to oblige them, if they could take down the music from his playing it—for to write it himself he was unable, as he only played by ear.

This was accordingly done, and when finished, they thanked him, and offered him five shillings in remuneration. But poor as he was, the gallantry of the old foreigner recoiled from being paid for this little service; and bowing respectfully, he told them he was too happy to oblige their signorinas, and that he required no other reward than the pleasure.

'How unlike an Englishman!' said one of the ladies.

'An Englishman would have held the two half-crowns in the palm of his hand, and looked at them with an air of astonishment and disappointment, as if he could not conceive what we meant by offering him so little,' said the other; and this trifling trait of character having interested them in favour of the poor stranger, they proceeded to make some further inquiries as to his situation.

'Then you travel about, and support yourself by your violin?'

'Sì, signora,' answered the old man.

'And have you never been in London before?'

'Never,' he replied.

'Then how will you find yourself food, or a lodging, when you can speak no English?'

The old man said he did not know, but he had encountered great difficulties before, and he hoped God would protect him still.

'I wonder if Thomas could recommend him to a lodging,' said one of the ladies; 'let us inquire if he is at home.'

Thomas, who was their brother's groom, said he could get him a lodging in the Mews, where his master's horse stood, if he could pay for it. Without referring to the stranger on the subject, the young ladies said they would be answerable for the rent for a month at anyrate; agreeing that they owed him as much as that for the music. So, having desired the groom to give him something to eat below, the poor foreigner, after partaking of some bread and cheese, was conducted to the house of Thomas's acquaintance, and introduced into a more tidy room than he would probably have had the luck to discover for himself.

Mrs Hudson was a laundress, and a widow with one son, a scapegrace, on whom she doted, to her own and his great

injury; for she had indulged him most injudiciously in his childhood; and now that he was grown up, she sacrificed the fruits of her laborious industry to supply the idle and dissipated habits her former weakness had engendered.

George Hudson was a fine young man too, in spite of his faults: he was handsome, good-natured, lively, and really fond of his mother in his heart; but then he was so thoughtless and extravagant, so destitute of any fixed principles, and so often led astray by worthless companions, that he was always getting into scrapes and difficulties. However, the agreeable qualities he possessed rendered him a great favourite with the young women of his acquaintance; and amongst the rest, had won him the heart of a cousin of his own, called Lucy Watson, who lived in the capacity of housemaid in a baronet's family. Now, it happened about this time that Lucy's master, Sir Henry Massey, was about to be married; and it was arranged that, on the day of the wedding, after the bride and bridegroom had left London, the servants were to celebrate the joyful event by a ball, to which each should invite his own friends and relations. So Lucy of course invited George and his mother; and George begged leave to bring his friend Jack Pearson, a capital fellow, and a very good dancer.

Great were the preparations above stairs and below for this grand occasion; and great was the excitement and expectation on the part both of the entertainers and their visitors; whilst good Mrs Hudson, who by this time had become much attached to the poor foreigner, her lodger, thought it such a pity that he should not be happy as well as the rest, that she persuaded Lucy to extend her invitation to him, on the plea that his violin would be a valuable acquisition to the party. So, after making some demur

about the shabbiness of his clothes, the old man having consented to accompany them, they all four repaired to Grosvenor Street, where they found a large party already assembled in the servants' hall.

As the poor stranger really played a great deal better than the musician they had engaged for the occasion, he was extremely well received, and made very welcome; whilst his lame attempts at English contributed much to the hilarity of the party, many of whom could not conceive why he should prefer calling the candle a *chandelle*, or the chair a *chaise;* Joey, the stable-boy, taking particular pains to correct his parts of speech, and make him comprehend that a *chaise* 'was quite another sort of bob, what took'd a horse to drawing of it!' Altogether, the evening passed away gaily enough, and everybody went home well pleased.

'It was capital fun, wasn't it, old boy?' said George to the stranger on the following morning; and the foreigner, perceiving that an assent was expected, smiled, and said: '*Oui, oui!*'

This passed whilst they were taking a later breakfast than usual, and George fell to expatiating on Jack Pearson's capital dancing: he was so glad he had taken him; he was much the best dancer there; and so forth; when the eulogium was suddenly interrupted by some very unexpected visitors—no less a person than Sir Henry Massey's house-steward, accompanied by two extremely suspicious-looking strangers.

'I am sorry to interrupt you,' said Mr Terry, as they all rose to receive him; 'but a very unpleasant circumstance has occurred. An article of value has disappeared: a miniature of my lady set in diamonds, which was brought yesterday from the jeweller's just after the carriage had

driven away; and which, intending to forward by the mail, I had unfortunately brought down to the steward's room.'

'And what do you suppose is become of it?' inquired George, looking as he felt quite unconcerned in the matter.

'Somebody must have laid hands on it, I am afraid,' returned Terry; 'most of the company were in and out of that room taking refreshments in the course of the evening, you know.'

'And you are come to see if we have got it, I suppose?' answered George laughing. 'Well, come on, my boy. Here am I; search me if you like!'

Mrs Hudson also, though somewhat mortified at the implied suspicion, offered to be searched, and to conduct the officers over her small house; whilst the foreigner, who understood nothing of what was going on, remained standing in silence.

'We must search the old man too,' said Mr Terry to the officers.

'*Comment?*' said he, making some resistance as they took hold of him.

'He does not know what it means, poor man,' said Mrs Hudson.—'Never mind, mounseer,' she added, clapping the old man on the back to encourage him; 'it 's all right.'

'Hollo! what have we got here?' exclaimed Townshend, one of the officers, as he opened a small box which he had found in the foreigner's bosom, and drew from it the miniature of a beautiful young girl in the dress of an Italian peasant.

'Bless my soul!' exclaimed Terry, snatching at it. 'But where are the diamonds?—where is the setting?' for the picture, which was somewhat faded and defaced, was without any setting whatever.

'Is that it?' asked Townshend.

'It must be it, though I should hardly have known it again,' returned the steward.—'What have you done with the setting?—where are the diamonds?' said he, addressing the old man sharply.

'*Perdona!*' said the foreigner; 'what he say?'

But he had not English enough to comprehend their explanations; so, greatly to his own perplexity, and the grief and dismay of Mrs Hudson, they handed him off straightway to the police-office, George going with them to 'see the fun.'

On being interrogated there in French, and informed of what he was accused, he laughed at them, and said that the miniature was the portrait of his own daughter, which she herself had given him; a fact which the magistrate asserted to be highly improbable, as it was evidently the production of a first-rate artist.

'It was nevertheless true,' the old man said; and, moreover, it had been handsomely set in gold; though necessity had obliged him to part with the setting for bread. On being asked how the daughter of so poor a man should have had a portrait that must have cost at least thirty or forty guineas, he answered that his daughter, who was now dead, had once been rich. 'She was,' said he, 'a singer at the Italian opera in Paris; and that portrait was taken of her in the costume she had worn in her native village.'

To all this, however, Terry, when it was interpreted to him, answered that the miniature was beyond all doubt the one they had lost; 'for,' said he, 'supposing it possible that the dress were similar, it is quite impossible that the face should be the same. Now, although this portrait is sadly altered and spoiled since yesterday, which, I suppose,

has been done on purpose, yet it is certainly my lady's likeness.'

Upon this the old man was committed, much to his own amazement and indignation; and what concerned him still more was, that they took the picture from him. But although they had got the thief and the miniature, the gold and the diamonds were not forthcoming; nor could all their threats and entreaties induce the old man to confess what he had done with them; and to that effect, with great lamentations and contrition for his own carelessness, Terry wrote to the baronet. The picture, he said, was retained by the magistrate, or he would have sent it.

On receiving this unwelcome intelligence, Sir Henry, who was no farther off than Brighton, came up to London; but when shewn the miniature, he was infinitely more puzzled than Terry had been. He saw differences imperceptible to the steward.

'It is most extraordinary!' said he; 'it is the same, and yet it is not the same! Let us send for the artist, and hear what he says.'

The artist said it was the most incomprehensible thing he ever saw; it was not the picture he had painted; it was the work of a French artist, he was certain; and it must either be a portrait of the same lady, or her sister. 'Had she a sister?'

'She never had a sister,' said Sir Henry; 'but nothing is more probable than that some French artist may have taken Lady Massey's likeness; but the singularity is, that it should be precisely in that costume! Besides, I never heard her say that she had sat for her picture.'

'And how should it be in the possession of this old beggar?' said the artist.

'Let us send for him and ask him,' said Sir Henry. So the old foreigner was brought to the office, and being introduced into the magistrate's private room, he found himself alone with two strange gentlemen, who began to interrogate him in French; with much more civility, however, than had been practised towards him before.

'You say this is the portrait of your daughter, I understand?'

'Sì, signor.'

'Pray, can you tell me where it was painted, and by whom?'

'À Paris, par Le Roy.'

'I thought so,' said the artist.

'And your daughter was a singer at the French opera?' said Sir Henry.

'Sì, signor.'

'May I inquire her name?'

'Paulina Melloni.'

'Paulina Melloni! Indeed! Are you the father of Paulina Melloni?'

'Sì, signor; that is to say, I was. *È morta!*' he added with a heavy sigh—'Paulina Melloni is dead.'

'She was a great loss to the stage when she withdrew from it,' said Sir Henry. 'Pray, take a chair;' for he was passionately fond of music, and he was beginning to feel an interest in the father of one of his favourite singers. 'But I am sorry to see the father of Paulina reduced to such extremities; what has brought you so low?'

'Ah! that would be a long story,' returned the old man, 'which the signor would not care to be troubled with. Paulina left a daughter—a dear child—an angel of beauty like herself; and with a voice! Ah, signori, if you had

ever heard that voice! Paulina's was fine; but if you had once heard my Nina's'——

'Whose?' cried Sir Henry, starting from his seat. 'Did you say Nina?'

'Sì, signor,' answered the old man, stepping forward and looking eagerly in his face. 'Nina Marabini; for though her real name was Melloni, so we always called her.'

'Then you are her grandfather, Giuseppe?' said Sir Henry.

'I am,' returned the old man, dropping into a seat, and almost fainting from agitation. 'Where—where is my child?'

'Your Nina is my wife, good friend,' said Sir Henry, giving him his hand kindly; 'and glad she will be to see her grandfather. We sent to Spoleto to inquire for you; and only last week I received a letter from my agent, saying you had long left it.'

We need not attempt to paint the joy of the meeting that ensued between the old man and his darling; and it is scarcely necessary to explain, that the same fancy for being painted in the becoming costume they had formerly worn had influenced both the young women, and so occasioned the resemblance between the pictures, and the subsequent happy discovery. Nina, who had been enticed out of the garden by Michelet's inimitable flute-playing, and carried off to be educated for the stage, had never known her mother's name, nor had she been acquainted with the fact of her having been an opera-singer—poor Paulina's sad experience, whatever it was, had given birth to the desire that her child should be kept in ignorance of these circumstances. Nina found herself the property of two strangers, who treated her kindly enough, whilst they had her taught to read and write, and procured her the first instructions in

singing and music, to which nearly all her time was devoted. At first she had grieved very much at the separation from her grandfather and grandmother, which, however, she was told had been effected in that manner with their entire concurrence and approbation, in order to spare the pain of parting; and that, by-and-by, she would see them again. Young memories are short, and young tears soon dried. Nina delighted in music, and her joy in it ere long consoled her; and as she worked *con amore*, she became in due time a most accomplished singer. When the period arrived that she was to be produced, her master, who was very proud of her, gave a select soirée, to which he invited a few distinguished persons to hear her, amongst whom was Sir Henry Massey, who happened to be at that time in Paris. Her extreme resemblance to the lost favourite, Paulina Melloni, whom many of the company remembered, struck every one, Sir Henry, who was a man of five-and-thirty, amongst the rest; and what with looking at her whilst this subject was discussed, and what with hearing her sing, he contrived to lose his heart to the *débutante;* and having refunded to Herbois the cost of her education, instead of appearing on the stage, she became Lady Massey.

As for the miniature and the diamonds, they had, by a very ingenious process, become the temporary property of that capital dancer, Jack Pearson, on the evening of the ball. They were traced to him, and recovered; after which experience of his attractive qualities, George not only forswore his acquaintance, but made some very vigorous efforts at self-reform, which, after various alternations and relapses, terminated ultimately, to the infinite joy of his mother, in a very satisfactory degree of amendment in his own character and conduct.

A STORY OF APSLEY HOUSE.

One fine autumn day, in the year 1750, as his majesty George II. was taking a ride in Hyde Park, his eye was attracted by the figure of an old soldier, who was resting on a bench placed at the foot of an oak-tree. The king, whose memory of faces was remarkable, recognised him as a veteran who had fought bravely by his side in some of his continental battles; and kindly accosting him, the old man, who was lame, hobbled towards him.

'Well, my friend,' said the monarch, 'it is now some years since we heard the bullets whistle at the battle of Dettingen; tell me what has befallen you since.'

'I was wounded in the leg, please your majesty, and received my discharge, and a pension, on which my wife and I are living, and trying to bring up our only son.'

'Are you comfortable? Is there anything you particularly wish for?'

'Please your majesty, if I might make bold to speak, there is one thing that would make my wife, poor woman, as happy as a queen, if she could only get it. Our son is

a clever boy, and as we are anxious to give him a good education, we try every means in our power to turn an honest penny; so my wife keeps an apple-stall outside the Park gate, and on fine days, when she is able to be out, she often sells a good deal. But sun and dust spoil the fruit, and rainy weather keeps her at home; so her profits are but little—not near enough to keep our boy at school. Now, please your majesty, if you would have the goodness to give her the bit of waste ground outside the Park gate, we could build a shed for her fruit-stall, and it would be, I may say, like an estate to us.'

The good-natured monarch smiled, and said: 'You shall have it, my friend. I wish all my subjects were as moderate in their requests as you.' He then rode on, followed by the grateful blessings of his faithful veteran.

In a few days a formal conveyance of the bit of ground to James Allen, his wife, and their heirs for ever, was forwarded to their humble dwelling. The desired shed was speedily erected, and the good woman's trade prospered beyond her expectations. Often, indeed, the king himself would stop at the Park gate to accost her, and taking an apple from her tempting store, deposit a golden token in its place. She was thus enabled to procure a good education for her son, who really possessed considerable talents.

Years rolled on. George II. and the veteran were both gathered to their fathers; but Mrs Allen still carried on her trade, hoping to lay up some money for her son, who was become a fine young man, and had obtained a situation as head clerk in a large haberdashery establishment. He lived with his mother in a neat, though humble dwelling, a little way out of the city; and thither he hoped soon to bring a fair young bride, the daughter of a Mr Gray, a

music-teacher, who resided near them. 'Sweet Lucy Gray,' as her lover was wont to call her, had given her consent, and the happy day was already fixed.

One morning, however, when Mrs Allen proceeded as usual to her place of merchandise, she was startled to perceive the space around her fruit-stall filled with workmen conveying stones, mortar, and all the implements necessary for commencing a building. Some were standing round the shed, evidently preparing to demolish it. 'Come, old lady,' said one of the men, 'move your things out of this as fast as you can, for we can do nothing until the shed is down.'

'My shed!' she exclaimed; 'and who has given you authority to touch it?'

'The Lord Chancellor,' was the reply; 'he has chosen this spot for a palace that he is going to build, and which is intended to be somewhat grander than your fruit-stall. So look sharp about moving your property, for the shed must come down.'

Vain were the poor woman's tears and lamentations; her repeated assertions that the late king had given her the ground for her own, were treated with ridicule; and at length she returned home heart-sick and desponding.

Misfortunes, it is said, seldom come alone. That evening Edward Allen entered his mother's dwelling wearing a countenance as dejected as her own. He threw himself on a chair, and sighed deeply. 'O mother!' he said, 'I fear we are ruined: Mr Elliot has failed for an immense sum; there is an execution on his house and goods, and I and all his clerks are turned adrift. Every penny we possessed was lodged in his hands, and now we shall lose it all. Besides, there have been lately so many failures in the

city, that numbers of young men are seeking employment, and I'm sure I don't know where to turn to look for it. I suppose,' he added, trying to smile, 'we shall have nothing to depend on but your little trade; and I must give up the hope of marrying sweet Lucy Gray. It will be hard enough to see you suffering from poverty without bringing her to share it.'

'O Edward,' said his mother, 'what you tell me is bad enough; but, my poor boy, I have still worse news for you.' She then, with many tears, related the events of the morning, and concluded by asking him what they were to do.

Edward paused. 'And so,' said he at length, 'the Lord Chancellor has taken a fancy to my mother's ground, and her poor fruit-stall must come down to make room for his stately palace. Well, we shall see. Thank God, we live in free, happy England, where the highest has no power to oppress the lowest. Let his lordship build on: he cannot seize that which his sovereign bestowed on another. Let us rest quietly to-night, and I feel certain that all will yet be well.'

The following day, Edward presented himself at the dwelling of the Lord Chancellor. 'Can I see his lordship?' he inquired of the grave official who answered his summons.

'My lord is engaged just now, and cannot be seen except on urgent business.'

'My business is urgent,' replied the young man; 'but I will await his lordship's leisure.'

And a long waiting he had. At length, after sitting in an anteroom for several hours, he was invited to enter the audience-chamber. There, at a table covered with books

and papers, sat Lord Apsley. He was a dignified-looking man, still in the prime of life, with a pleasant countenance and quick penetrating eye. 'Well, my friend,' he said, 'what can I do for you?'

'Your lordship can do much,' replied Edward; 'yet all I seek is justice. You have chosen, as the site for your new palace, a piece of ground which his majesty King George II. bestowed on my parents and their heirs for ever; and since my father's death, my mother has remained in undisturbed possession. If your lordship will please to read this paper, you will see that what I state is the fact.'

Lord Apsley took the document, and perused it attentively. 'You are right, young man,' he said; 'the ground is indeed secured to your family by the act of our late gracious sovereign. I took possession of it, believing it to be a waste spot, but I now find I must become the tenant of your surviving parent. What does she expect for it?'

'That,' said Edward, 'she is satisfied to leave to your lordship. We are confident that the chief lawgiver of our country will do what is just and right.'

'You shall not be disappointed, young man,' replied the Chancellor. 'I was offered a site for my palace, equally eligible, at a yearly rent of four hundred pounds. That sum I will pay your mother, and have it properly secured to her heirs for ever.'

Edward thanked his lordship, and respectfully withdrew.

Before a week had elapsed, his mother was established in a neat and comfortable dwelling in one of the suburbs; and ere two had gone by, sweet Lucy (no longer Gray) might be seen in the sunny little garden filling a basket with the fruit of a golden pippin tree, which the old lady

pronounced to be almost as fine as the apples which his gracious majesty King George II. was wont to select from her stall at Hyde Park Corner.

And thus it came to pass that the stately mansion of England's warrior-duke is subject, at the present day, to a ground-rent of four hundred pounds a year, payable to the representatives of the old apple-woman.

THE DANCING-GIRL OF INDIA.

THE Rajah of Husseinpoor gave a splendid *nauch*, or dance, and supper, to the officers of a detachment of East India Company's troops, then on their way to the seat of war in the Ghoorka mountains. The festivity was conducted on a scale of profuse magnificence, such as the princes of Hindustan are fond of displaying on state occasions, and which forms a remarkable contrast to their ordinary simple and even frugal style of living. The spot selected for the occasion was outside the town, at no great distance from the British camp. The enormous tent of the rajah was composed entirely of blue and white velvet, in alternate strips, with a deep border of cloth of gold. The cords were made of twisted strands of silk and gold, with tassels of the same precious metal. The gilded tent-poles had spear-heads of solid gold. The canvas floor-cloth on which the tent was pitched was covered with a carpet of crimson velvet, with a deep fringe of gold bullion. On this, in the centre, was spread a snow-white cloth for the dancers. Attendants, in

surcoats and trousers of blue velvet, with crimson shawls about the waist, and turbans of brocade, stood round the sides of the tent, some with silver maces, others bearing large fans, which they waved over the heads of the guests, and others with torches composed of strips of muslin steeped in oil and wrapped around iron spindles. These cast a wild and flaring light over this scene of truly oriental splendour, in which the Cashmere shawls, jewelled turbans, and loose graceful garments of the native nobles, were contrasted with the scarlet uniforms and glittering side-arms of the European officers. The latter were mostly 'old hands,' who had been long enough in India to be perfectly versed in the customs of the people. The guests reclined at their ease on cushions and couches, eating sweetmeats, or drinking the wines which were served in profusion by the attendants.

At length, at a signal given by the rajah, the *nauchnees*, or dancers, made their appearance. There were two of them, young Hindustani girls, with fine regular features, and dusty bronze-like skins. Their large dark eyes appeared yet larger and more languishing from the circle of black pigment, called *soorma* (a preparation of antimony), which was drawn around the inner edges of the eyelids. The tips of their fingers and the soles of their bare feet were stained of a rosy hue with the juice of the henna plant. They wore full trousers, and skirts of gay-coloured muslins embroidered with gold, with a muslin *chuddur*, or scarf, over the neck, and a figured shawl about the waist—the dress of these females being far more modest than that of European opera-dancers. Silver anklets, hung with little bells, jingled to the slow movements of their feet. The large hanging sleeves of their vests shewed the bracelets of gold and gems on their slender rounded arms. In their ears they had rings,

of which the golden setting was hardly visible for the brilliancy of the jewels which flashed and glittered in the torchlight. These were presents from their admirers; for the dancers of the semi-barbarous East are almost as much petted, and as widely celebrated, as those of the civilised West—which is saying a great deal.

The musicians now struck up their monotonous scraping and thumping, and the nauchnees commenced their song and dance. The oriental style of dancing, it is well known, differs greatly from that to which we are accustomed. It consists principally in movements of the body and arms: the feet, though in constant motion, remaining nearly in the same place. Our dances are addressed wholly to the eye, and are intended chiefly to gratify that taste for regular and graceful motion which seems as natural as the love of music. The eastern dance is decidedly of a more intellectual character. It is accompanied by a song, or rather the singing is considered the principal part of the entertainment, to which the dance is subsidiary. Its motions are intended to illustrate the sentiments conveyed in the words. To this end every movement, attitude, and look is made to contribute with wonderful skill. Most of the songs express the passion of love, with all its vicissitudes of gaiety, sadness, hope, suspicion, transport, jealousy, fury, despair. In these cases the acting is sometimes exquisite, and such as would excite admiration in any theatre. Sometimes a martial air is introduced, or a pastoral carol, or a song descriptive of the chase, or other incidents of daily life in the East. Many of these compositions are as famous as the favourite operas and ballets of our boards, and particular dances are called for by the guests of the nauch at their pleasure. The exertions of the dancers are so great, that their excitement soon exhausts

them, and several sets are usually ready, who succeed one another, and vary the performances.

The Rajah of Husseinpoor had been at some expense and trouble to procure the most celebrated dancers of the country; and many of them were greatly applauded, especially by the foreigners, who, strange as it may appear, almost invariably learn, after a while, to prefer this kind of exhibition to the graces of the ballet by which Taglioni and Elssler have acquired their fame. One of the nauchnees in particular attracted their attention, from her youth and modest appearance. She came forward at first with great diffidence, almost trembling, and sang a pastoral song somewhat similar to the *Ranz des Vaches*, with a voice so plaintively sweet, and a manner so graceful and winning, that the call for its repetition was universal. She excited as much curiosity as an actress making her first appearance on the stage. Her complexion was fairer than that of the other nauchnees, and it appeared still more so from the contrast with the chuddur or mantilla which she wore, falling from her head over her shoulders, and which was of black stuff, after the fashion of those worn by the mountaineers of the north. The rajah, a fat old Mussulman, who prided himself on being a connoisseur in the art, was much taken with the new performer. He called to him the *sirdar*, or director of the entertainment, and inquired her name and origin.

'Light of the world,' answered the sirdar, 'the girl's name is Lonee; and she comes from the province of Kumaon, in the neighbourhood of Almorah.'

'She is not a Ghoorka?' said the rajah.

'The maharajah is right. She is a Vaisya, and was taken captive by the Ghoorkas, who sold her to some merchants, of whom your slave purchased her at the fair of Hurdwar.

She has been but two months in training, and promises to make an excellent nauchnee, but for her excessive desire to return to her native land.'

'I think,' observed the rajah with an air of great wisdom, 'that all these mountaineers are mad on that head.'

'True, Khodawund, servant of God,' replied the sirdar. 'They fall sick with longing for their barren hills and rocks, where the goats starve to death in winter, as I tell Lonee. I have been compelled, in order to keep up the girl's spirits, to promise her that, when she shall have earned a certain sum to repay me for what I have expended on her, she shall be free to return to Kumaon. Perhaps the maharajah would like to hear the girl relate her own history in a song which Zalim Singh, the bard, has composed for her?'

'By all means,' said the rajah, and the rest of the company eagerly joined in the call. Lonee, who had been standing with folded hands and downcast eyes during this conversation, now came forward, and sang with expressive action some verses, of which the following is a free translation:

LONEE'S SONG.

Where shines the god-mountain*
  Sublime o'er the earth;
Where leaps the god-river
  From ice into birth;
Where great Nanda Devi†
  Soars white to the moon—

* *Gangoutri*, the peak of the Himalaya from which the Ganges takes its rise, is considered by the Hindus to be the embodied form of Mahadeo, or Siva, the destroying power. *Ganga*, the deified river, is his daughter.

† *Nanda Devi*, before the altitude of Dhawalagari was known, was

There, there is my country,
Beloved Kumaon!

The bright stars of midnight
Their dews o'er us wept;
In the valley of Deenah
All peaceful we slept;
And fearless the nightingale
Warbled his song—
He heard but the streamlet
Soft rippling along.

What voices of terror
Ring wild through the night?
Up!—up! 'tis the Ghoorka!
Arm, arm for the fight!
Bring buckler and broadsword!
Bring matchlock and bow!
From the hill-sides all round us
Down thunders the foe!

Too late was the warning;
The struggle was vain;
Beside their own threshold
My brethren were slain;
Afar from her kindred
Poor Lonee was torn;
A slave to the stranger,
She wanders forlorn.

O noble Bahadurs,*
No more let me roam—
Redeem a poor maiden
Who sighs for her home.

considered the highest summit of the Himalayan chain. It rises 25,689 feet above the level of the sea.

* *Bahadur*, great personage, nobleman.

Think, gentle Feringhees,*
What fond hearts and true,
Beyond the Black Water,†
Are pining for you!

This appeal, chanted in earnest, moving tones, was answered not only by general applause, but by the more satisfactory response of a shower of jewels and gold pieces—the former coming from the native nobles, and the latter from the British officers. Lonee, 'with a smile on her lip and a tear in her eye,' hastened to gather up these contributions to her ransom, and was about to withdraw, when the rajah, who had been charmed by the novel and peculiar style of beauty of the young nauchnee, as well as by her character, so different from that of the class to which she belonged, bade her remain, and announced his intention of rewarding her deserts by promoting her into his zenanah. It was plainly his expectation that the damsel would receive this intelligence with transport, as indeed it was an unexampled honour for one of her profession. Poor Lonee, however, seemed to be otherwise affected. She stood for a moment as if thunderstruck; and then sinking at the rajah's feet, with joined hands in the attitude of supplication, she exclaimed: 'Mighty rajah, asylum of the earth, your slave is unworthy to enter your zenanah!'

'Tush!' returned the old Mussulman; 'if I say you are worthy, that is enough. Only conduct yourself well, and you shall be favoured.'

* *Feringhee*, or Frank, is the usual term applied to Europeans by the natives of India.

† *Kala Pâni*, the Black Water, is the Hindu name for the ocean, of which their ideas and descriptions are of the most terrific kind—something like those which were common in Europe previous to the voyage of Columbus.

'Light of the universe,' replied the nauchnee, trembling and wringing her hands, 'what shall your slave say? She has bargained with the sirdar to pay him a thousand rupees, and then she will be free to return to her home and her kindred.'

'Well, well,' answered the rajah impatiently, 'I will pay the money. Have I not said it? You shall remain with me, to entertain me and my zenanah. You shall dress in brocade and shawls of Cashmere, and shall feast on pilaus and sugar-plums. What more would you have? *Bus!* [enough!] You can go.'

But in spite of this permission, intended for a command, poor Lonee remained kneeling, with every sign of confusion and dismay. 'O maharajah,' she said, 'pardon your wretched slave, but her heart is in her native land, among the hills of dear Kumaon.'

'Wallah!' exclaimed the fat old chieftain, puffing and fuming with anger at this unexpected opposition. 'What fool's nonsense is this? Native hills! Dear Kumaon! Stuff! What is it to me where her heart is? Take her away!'

The attendants, in great haste, were about to obey this imperious order, when they were interrupted by the interposition of a third party. The English officers had listened to this conversation with attention, exchanging remarks now and then among themselves, and evidently sympathising with the dancing-girl. At this moment one of the youngest of them, whose uniform shewed him to be a lieutenant, spoke hastily.

'This proceeding,' he said, 'appears to me unjust. If the girl has made a contract with her master, it is right that she should have an opportunity of fulfilling it.'

'Well; what then?' inquired the rajah angrily. 'Have I not twice said that I would pay the money?'

'But,' returned the lieutenant, 'it was a part of the agreement that Lonee should have permission to return to her native land.'

'Bah!' retorted the Mussulman, his round eyes gleaming with anger; 'what do I care for the agreement? What fuss is this about a nauchnee? Is she not a slave? Is not this my land? Can I not do what I please?'

'No!' replied the young Englishman quickly; 'not if you were the padisha himself. You shall not perpetrate this injustice in the presence of British officers.'

The rajah turned almost white with rage, and some very unpleasant scene would have ensued, but for the interference of Colonel G——, a tall, thin, gray-headed officer, with a yellow complexion, and an air of invincible coolness.

'Mr R——,' he said in English, 'you are too hasty; you forget yourself.' Then turning to the rajah, he continued in Hindustani: 'It would be truly unworthy of our wisdom if we should allow a dispute about a dancing-girl to create ill-blood between us and our esteemed ally, the Rajah of Husseinpoor. All this business may be easily settled. The noble rajah, with that generosity for which he is famous throughout the world' (here the old chief stroked his beard), 'has condescended to notice a poor nauchnee, who is a slave, and to offer to pay her ransom, and to provide for her most liberally. Assuredly such munificence is not to be surpassed. But it seems that the girl is anxious to return to the country in which she was born; certainly a natural feeling, and one in which we all partake who are in like manner condemned to spend our lives at a distance from our

native land. But she must understand that it is very doubtful whether she would find the home of her childhood, if she should be allowed to seek it. The ravages of the Ghoorkas have been dreadfully destructive throughout that unhappy land. Many villages have been swept away, and their inhabitants exterminated.'

Here poor Lonee, sobbing bitterly, covered her face with her hands, vainly attempting to hide her tears. The colonel continued, apparently unmoved: 'It is my opinion, therefore, that she cannot do better than accept the liberal and condescending kindness of our esteemed friend the rajah. But if she should obstinately persist in her resolution to return to Kumaon, we must endeavour, among us, to make up the sum necessary to satisfy her master, to which I will willingly contribute; and I doubt not that the generosity of the rajah, and of these other princes, will be displayed with its customary magnificence.'

There is no virtue on which oriental magnates so much pride themselves as on their liberality. The colonel was thoroughly acquainted with the character of those with whom he had to deal, and his speech was received with exclamations of '*Ucha! bhote khoob!*' ('Good! well said!') —in which the old rajah joined, though rather sulkily. But he was well aware that his 'esteemed allies' were, in fact, his masters, and he had an especial dread of the shrewd imperturbable old colonel.

'Well, Lonee,' said the latter, 'tell us your final determination. Will you remain in the zenanah of his Highness, or will you take the risk of wandering houseless and homeless over the hills of Kumaon?'

'Protector of the poor,' replied the nauchnee without hesitation, 'how can your slave answer? She is a poor foolish

girl, but her heart is in her native land, and if she does not see it again she will die.'

'Well, gentlemen,' said the colonel, 'I think we can make up a purse among us to ransom the poor girl.'

Here he was interrupted by his *khitmutgar*, or personal attendant, a Mussulman, clad in a showy surcoat of yellow muslin, with yellow trousers, and a blue shawl-girdle and turban, who came forward with joined hands, in the attitude of one asking a favour. 'Will the Colonel Sahib listen to the petition of his servant?' he said.

'What is it?' inquired the colonel, somewhat surprised.

'I have served the Colonel Sahib fifteen years, and he has found no fault with me.'

'True, Sahaduk,' replied his master, 'and you once saved me from a tiger. Well, what now?'

'Gurreebpurwar, protector of the poor,' answered Sahaduk, 'I want a wife. My wife died two years ago in Malwah, and I have a little child, and no one to take care of it when I am waiting on your Highness. The Colonel Sahib's kindness has made me rich. The Vaisya women have the report of being excellent wives. Let your servant pay the girl's ransom, and marry her.'

'With all my heart,' replied the colonel laughing, 'provided you can get her consent. I am not her father, and cannot give her to you.—What do you say, Lonee? Will you be the wife of my khitmutgar? He is a worthy fellow, and will take good care of you.'

The young girl looked earnestly at Sahaduk, who was a handsome man of about thirty, with a countenance expressive of courage and good-nature. 'Will he take me to Kumaon?' she asked.

'Certainly,' replied the colonel; 'we are on our way there at this moment.'

Lonee's countenance brightened up. 'And will he never beat me? We Vaisya women do not like to be beaten, like the wives in this lowland country.'

'My servant must answer for himself,' replied the colonel. 'I think I have heard of his beating his former wife; hey, Sahaduk?'

'Never but once, Gurreebpurwar,' answered the khitmutgar, 'when she neglected our first child, and it died.'

'Ah, then she deserved it!' said Lonee. 'I will be your wife, for I think you will treat me well; and I shall see Kumaon again.'

'Well, off with you both,' said the colonel; 'get married at once, for we start to-morrow morning for Almorah.'

The couple, so unexpectedly mated, retired; and the party, whose good-humour had been restored by this little scene, applied themselves heartily to the supper which was now brought in. The rajah washed away the remains of his sulkiness in a bowl of brandy-punch, which Lieutenant R—— concocted by way of a peace-offering, and which the sinful old Mussulman drank without regard to the interdict of his religion. The entertainment was not long protracted, as the officers were compelled to withdraw early, having to set off before the dawn on the following morning.

In ten days, Colonel G——, with the troops under his command, had passed the Terrai, or belt of forest-land and marsh, noted for its deadly climate, which separates the plain of Hindustan from the hill-country at the base of the Himalaya. The province of Kumaon is composed entirely of rocky mountain ridges, intersected by narrow valleys or glens, like the most rugged districts in the Scottish Highlands.

Though nearly under the tropic, the vegetation bears the character proper to the northern limits of the temperate zone. Oaks, pines, firs, the pear, the raspberry, the blackberry, and other trees and fruits to which they had long been unaccustomed, reminded the British invaders of their native land. The original inhabitants and proper owners of the country were the Vaisyas, a fine race of mountaineers, who, in their manner of life, and their simple, honest, industrious character, have many points of resemblance to the Swiss. They build good houses of limestone and slate, and cultivate not only their valleys, but even the terraced sides of their rugged hills, wherever this is possible. They have herds of small cattle, which they keep for their milk, but never kill them, that being forbidden by their religion. Although a brave and high-spirited people, they had the ill luck to be conquered by the Ghoorkas, or natives of Nepaul, to the east of Kumaon, who took advantage of some civil dissensions among the Vaisyas to assail them when disunited, and unprepared for a contest. The Ghoorkas, who are a race partaking of the Tartar physiognomy and character, treated the conquered Vaisyas with great cruelty, ravaging their villages, murdering all who resisted, and selling their wives and children into slavery. Fortunately, in the course of their maraudings, they came in collision with the British authorities; and the result was the war of 1815, in which the Ghoorkas were expelled from the conquered territory. In this contest our troops were greatly indebted to the assistance of the Vaisyas, who, regarding them as deliverers, did all in their power to aid them, acting as guides and messengers, dragging their cannon up the declivities, and fighting bravely when they came to close quarters with the enemy.

Colonel G——, with the forces under his command, had been ordered to make a detour in the mountains near Almorah, for the purpose of dislodging the enemy from a strong position which they held in front of the British main body. Unfortunately, the guide who had been furnished him was not well acquainted with the country; and after wandering about for three or four days in the wildest recesses of the hills, the colonel found himself one evening in a rugged defile between two precipices, with no outlet in front but by a narrow and perilous ascent. Determined not to bivouac in this dangerous position, he pushed forward until he was checked by the alarming intelligence that the passage was barricaded and occupied by a strong body of Ghoorkas. It would have been madness to attack them in the steep path, where three men could not advance abreast, and Colonel G—— at once gave orders to retreat from the defile by the way in which they had entered. But at this moment word was brought from the rearguard that the enemy had appeared in great force at that end of the pass. It was plain to the colonel and his officers that they were caught in a trap, from which it would be impossible to extricate themselves by fighting without heavy loss. A hurried consultation was held. Lieutenant R—— proposed to scale the side of the ravine with a small party, and surprise the enemy by an attack in the rear. The guide was sent for, and interrogated respecting the feasibility of this movement; but he declared his utter ignorance and perplexity. He was a Vaisya, but from a different part of the province, and had only travelled this road on one occasion many years before. While they were still engaged in the discussion, Sahaduk, the khitmutgar, made his appearance, begging to be heard. His wife, he said, was well acquainted with the country,

and might be of service, if they would be pleased to listen to her.

'By all means: bring her here, Sahaduk,' said the colonel. 'Why did we not think of this before? Let us hear what she has to say.'

Lonee now came forward, no longer in the garb of a nauchnee, but apparelled as a Vaisya damsel, in a frock of gray camlet, with a black mantle of woollen cloth over her head. She was perfectly familiar, she said, with the place in which they were, having frequently visited it in search of bilberries and other wild fruit. She knew of a path by which not merely a small party, but, if they chose, the whole force, might ascend the side of the ravine, and regain the main road to Almorah without difficulty.

'Shew us that, my good girl,' said the colonel, 'and you will do us a service for which you shall be well rewarded.'

'No, Sahib,' said Lonee eagerly; 'not that. Is it not to free my country from these robbers? And did you not save me from the rajah, and bring me to Kumaon?'

'Well, my daughter,' said the colonel, 'shew us the path, and we will dispute about the recompense hereafter.'

Lonee was as good as her word. The track up which she led was steep and rugged, but practicable for infantry not burdened with heavy arms or baggage. A dozen men could have defended it with ease; but the Ghoorkas were probably ignorant of its existence. By midnight the whole detachment had made its way out of the defile in which it had been blockaded, and was encamped in a valley of some extent, offering a good field for action in case of an attack. Many houses were scattered through the valley, but they were tenantless, and appeared to have been lately shattered and spoiled by ruthless hands. 'The Ghoorkas have been

at work here,' said Lieutenant R——. 'Do you know this place, Lonee?'

'Do I know it, Sahib?' she said. 'Ah, woe is me! it is Deenah! It is the valley where I was born. They are all gone. There is not one left. It is as the Colonel Sahib said. O my father!—my mother! I shall see you no more!'

'Perhaps they have only fled, and will return as soon as the Ghoorkas are driven away,' observed Lieutenant R——. The remark appeared to inspire Lonee with new hope. She darted up the side of the hill which overhung the valley, and reached at length a lofty crag which jutted out from the declivity. Standing there, she uttered a shrill, piercing cry, in the tone in which natives of mountainous countries are wont to call to each other. Three times she repeated this call, listening anxiously in the intervals. At length a response of the same kind was heard, but evidently from a great distance, and Lonee slowly descended the hill. There were, she said, some of her people in the neighbourhood, but they were afraid to approach. It would be necessary to wait till the morning, when she would be able to learn more.

When the morning dawned, the British officers perceived that their escape from the ravine had been discovered by the Ghoorkas, who had shifted their ground, and were now drawn up in great force in the road to Almorah. Immediate preparations were made for an attack. The struggle which ensued was desperate, the British troops being superior in arms and discipline, and their opponents in numbers, with the advantage of the ground. The battle, however, was suddenly decided by an unexpected event. A furious attack was made by some fresh assailants upon the rear of the

Ghoorkas, who, surprised and panic-stricken, broke and fled in every direction. The English officers, unwilling that their men should be scattered, soon recalled them from the pursuit. The auxiliaries who had so unexpectedly come to their aid were less forbearing. They were no other than the Vaisyas of the neighbourhood, who, warned by the cries of Lonee, had suddenly collected and assailed their enemies when they found them engaged with the English. They now pursued and cut them down without mercy, thus avenging the many outrages which they had endured at their hands.

When the pursuit was over, the Vaisyas assembled in a body, and came forward to greet their allies. They were headed by a noble-looking old man, whose stalwart form betokened great strength, and who bore in his hand a heavy wooden mace shod with iron, which had evidently been wielded with unsparing vigour. His looks, however, betrayed no exultation, but were composed, and even melancholy. He was heartily welcomed by Colonel G—— and his officers, who acknowledged the assistance which they had received from his well-timed attack. The old man received their compliments and congratulations very calmly. He said that he and his people should always be grateful to the English for taking so much trouble to deliver them from the tyrannical Ghoorkas. For his own part, he had not much cause for rejoicing: the Ghoorkas had spoiled his homestead, slain his two sons, and carried his daughter into captivity. His house could be repaired, and his fields stocked anew; but of what avail would it be to one who had no children to share in his good fortune, or to succeed him when he died?

Poor Lonee could endure no more. Casting off the black

mantle which concealed her face, she threw her arms around her father's neck, laughing and weeping at the same time in the excitement of her joy. The astonishment and delight of the old man at thus unexpectedly recovering his lost child may be readily conceived. It appeared that Lonee's mother was still alive, and there were others of her kindred among the neighbours who were now coming in from all directions. The officers, as may be supposed, were much pleased at witnessing the happiness of their pretty protégée, to whom they themselves had been not a little indebted for their extrication from the embarrassment of the preceding night. As it was impossible to delay their march, Sahaduk was directed to remain at Deenah with his wife until the war was over—an order which, without disparagement to his courage, he was very willing to obey.

In a few weeks the Ghoorkas were compelled to evacuate the country, and a permanent military station was formed at Almorah. Sahaduk resided there with his master, until the latter was ordered to another part of India. He then rewarded the faithful services of his attendant, and discharged also his debt of obligation to Lonee, by fitting up a handsome shop in Almorah, which he made over in fee-simple to his ex-khitmutgar. Should any of our friends hereafter chance to visit the capital of Kumaon, we recommend them to make their purchases in the linen-drapery line of the worthy Sahaduk Bhae, now one of the principal mahajans or merchants of Almorah. Lonee is his faithful helpmate, the careful mother of half-a-dozen fine young mountaineers; and from all that we can learn, we have no doubt that he has honourably fulfilled his promise—never to beat her unless she deserved it.

THE CHASE.

It was, as nearly as I can recollect, about the year 1806 that I left Carthagena, supercargo of a schooner—a regular clipper, with a freight of dollars and cochineal, for the Danish island of St Thomas. In consequence of the war, the ocean was crowded with British cruisers on the look-out for an enemy; go where you would, you were certain of being overhauled by an English man-of-war, and that not in the most ceremonious manner. The commanders were not always scrupulous in determining between friends and foes; and it often happened, if a valuable cargo were in question, or if the captain of the cruiser had been worked into a fit of ill-humour by a warm chase, that neutral vessels were seized, and condemned as lawful prizes: and a species of marine logic was employed to justify this peremptory mode of appropriation, for which there was no redress.

Our captain and crew were all blacks: Baptiste, the former, was a negro of herculean frame, with a spirit to match—prompt and fearless in action, considerate and firm in command. The men yielded him implicit obedience; they

performed their duties with alacrity; and a merrier set of fellows I never sailed with. Knowing the vigilance and suspicion of the English cruisers, I felt more than usually anxious about my charge, and, with my telescope under my arm, passed nearly the whole of the time, day and night, upon deck. For some days, nothing beyond the ordinary incidents of a sea-voyage occurred to claim our attention; the breeze blew so steadily, that it left the men at leisure to amuse themselves with dances and songs on the forecastle, with a musical accompaniment formed by beating their hands together and slapping their thighs. The schooner proved herself a genuine clipper, for she flew through the water as though she felt the necessity for speed, cleaving the waves as they rose before her sharp prow with the ease and grace of a bird. Fast as we sailed, however, the dolphins and flying-fish kept pace with us; the former sported under our cut-water, and dived from side to side under the keel, shewing their glistening sides as they darted to the surface. The breeze was of that sort so delightful in the tropics—singing merrily among the cordage, tempering the scorching rays of the sun, fringing the tops of the dark-blue swells with a streak of white foam, and producing a feeling of exhilaration difficult to be described, but which, when once experienced, enables us to understand the fascinating influence of a sea-life upon those of a roving disposition.

It was fortunate for us, in more respects than one, that we had such a breeze; for the weather was so intensely hot, that I found it impossible to wear shoes, and walked bare-foot up and down the deck, which was kept wet by the spray that rained over us as our vessel dashed into a wave higher than usual. I kept a man at the mast-head constantly on the look-out; and to relieve my anxiety, as well

as to insure his vigilance, hailed him three or four times in the course of an hour. We had been out five or six days, when, one morning just as the redness in the eastern sky was rendering distant objects dimly visible, and, overcome with fatigue, I was about to turn in for a few hours while the captain took my place, the watch at the mast-head sang out: 'Sail ho!'

'Whereaway?' I hastily inquired, as, slinging the telescope round my neck, I sprang into the rigging.

'Away on the weather-bow,' was the answer.

I was soon on the cross-trees, and with the glass made out the stranger to be a square-rigged vessel. I at once felt certain of her being an English man-of-war, and hailing the captain, he mounted to my side. His opinion, after a long gaze at the unwelcome object, coincided with my own; and after a pause, during which he seemed to be revolving the chances in his mind, he said: 'What shall we do?'

'Do, Baptiste?' I answered. 'It is vexatious to lose ground, but there is no help; we must run for it.'

We lost no time in descending to the deck; the yards were braced round, and every inch of canvas spread that our masts and spars would bear, and away we went on a slant, as little as possible out of our course, and hoping to escape the watchful eyes of the Englishman. For a short time our manœuvre appeared to be successful; but as the sun rose higher above the horizon, the light reflected from our topsails betrayed us to the cruiser, for we saw her alter her course, and make sail directly in our track. Our negro captain looked over the schooner's side, and rubbed his hands in high glee as he noted her speed. 'Courage, Baptiste!' I cried; 'we have the heels of him; he has not caught us yet; neither shall he, if this wind holds.'

We edged off a little, to bring the wind more on our quarter; the clipper obeyed the impulse, and dashed through the water with a velocity that left a long white streak in her wake. The stranger, however, was well handled; every stitch of canvas was spread, and though for a time the issue appeared doubtful, yet her hull gradually rose into view. Another look through the telescope shewed her to be a frigate, a discovery that gave us at once to understand that we should not easily shake her off. It was an exciting moment: the blacks were collected on the forecastle, gesticulating vehemently as they watched the pursuing ship, and discussed the probabilities of dropping her. Baptiste and I paced the little quarter-deck in silence, except when a higher swell, shewing us the stranger more distinctly, elicited an observation as to the distance between us. That she neared us, there was no longer room to doubt; and Baptiste ran his eyes over the schooner's sails, and seemed to find relief in ordering the men to take another pull at the braces, which were already strained almost to the breaking point.

Another anxious half-hour passed, during which the cruiser came nearer and nearer. At first, I was at a loss to account for her advantage, but a moment's consideration shewed me that the breeze, as often happens in the tropics, was slowly rising from the surface of the water, and the frigate's sails being so much loftier than ours, retained a hold upon it which we had lost. Gradually the white curling waves subsided into long-drawn swells, on which our vessel rolled uneasily, while the sails at times flapped lazily against the mast as the breeze still ascended. Meantime the frigate held on her course, her topsails distended with the wind: we hoisted Danish colours; but as soon as she came within range, a jet of smoke issued from her bow-port, followed by

the report of a gun and the whistling of a shot as it flew over us. Resistance was out of the question; but I little relished the idea of giving up quietly a valuable cargo, the rather that, being under neutral colours, we ought to have been exempt from molestation: but, as before observed, sea morality at that day was not over-nice. We took no notice of the gun, and kept our colours flying and sails flapping, when another shot whizzed past, cutting the halliards of our mainsail, which immediately fell in cumbrous folds to the deck. 'Clipper ahoy!' hailed a voice through a speaking-trumpet from the deck of the frigate; 'what schooner's that?'

Seizing one of the shrouds, I leaped to the top of the bulwarks, and shouted in reply: 'The *Lively*, from Carthagena to St Thomas.—What ship's that?'

'His Majesty's frigate *Scorpion*,' was the hoarse answer. 'Send your boat on board.'

'Ay, ay, sir.' I was not, however, so well disposed to obey the order as my rejoinder might have seemed to warrant, and resolved to delay by every means in our power. The quarter-deck and shrouds of the cruiser were crowded with spectators watching our movements: I, however, turned the fall of the mainsail to account; and as it lay in a heap on our quarter, made a show of bustle in clearing it away to get at the tackles by which our boat was to be lowered, but in reality doing as little as possible. When at last the boat and tackles were clear, the oars were missing, and some time was passed in searching for them before they were brought up from below. Another shot was sent from the impatient frigate to quicken our movements; and no further excuse for delay presenting itself, the men took their seats in the boat, and I was stepping reluctantly into the

stern-sheets, when a slight breath of air shook our sails, which were yet hanging loose, and the schooner moved almost imperceptibly ahead. Instantly my resolution was taken: I knew that, with a light wind, we were more than a match for the frigate. 'Baptiste,' I cried, 'we shall beat him yet. —Tumble in, men—tumble in: bend on a new halliard, up mainsail, and away!'

The negroes obeyed with a glad shout; and in less time than it would take to describe, our mainsail again displayed its broad surface. I was not mistaken; the light breeze held, and pushed us rapidly through the water. The frigate's sails, which had been brailed up as soon as she came within hail, were hastily dropped; but the wind was too light to produce any advantageous effect upon her heavy mass; while we were slipping quietly away, as if by magic. A perfect fury seemed to take possession of those on board the cruiser: shot after shot was hurled after us with marvellous rapidity; fortunately not one struck us; and after a brief period of suspense, not unmingled with a little generous excitement, we were out of her reach.

We kept the same course until sunset, when only the upper sails of the frigate were visible. As night came on, the breeze again freshened, which placed the chances once more in her favour; but as soon as darkness hid us from her, we altered our course, and steered for our destination, not sorry to get rid of the tormentor. Mutual congratulations followed: the black crew were in the highest spirits; and as they had behaved well, an extra allowance of grog was served out to them. They made a rhyme of the incident, and danced till a late hour as they sang—

'Scorpion wit' him long sting,
No catch de lily Lively ting.'

Baptiste and I, though less noisy in our demonstrations of satisfaction, were not less sincere and hearty. But while congratulating each other on our escape, we were not unmindful of the means to secure our advantage: the same vigilant look-out was maintained as at the commencement of the voyage; but we saw nothing to excite further apprehensions; and at the end of three days, arrived at St Thomas. A week later, while I was transacting business with Mr King, the British consul, the *Scorpion* sailed into the harbour. The captain came on shore, and entering the office where we were seated, began to relate, with considerable warmth, the story of a troublesome chase which he had had after a fellow who, after all, contrived to give him the slip. I had already informed the consul of the circumstance. Turning to the captain, he said, smiling, as he pointed to me: 'This is the gentleman, sir, that you chased.' The other, at first, was incredulous; but the sight of the *Lively* at anchor in the port convinced him. When he could no longer doubt, he said in a haughty tone: ''Twas well for you, sir, that you got away, for I had made up my mind to make a prize of your vessel, and give you a couple of dozen into the bargain, for the trouble you gave us.'

'Fortune of war, captain,' I replied; 'you may have better luck next time.' But in my subsequent voyages I never saw anything more of the *Scorpion*. I now commit to paper this little episode in a busy life, by way of illustrating the utility of promptitude and determination even in apparently hopeless circumstances. There are few persons to whom the lesson will not be useful, if they are only capable of applying it.

THE DICTATOR.

SCENE THE FIRST.

In the vicinity of the city of Assumption, the capital of Paraguay (that irregular country, which, from the policy of seclusion so long pursued by its government, has been termed the Japan of South America), are scattered many country-houses belonging to the more wealthy citizens, who retire thither when their business is over, to escape from the scorching heat and stifling dust of the open, unpaved streets. To many of these villas, farms or plantations of considerable extent are attached, which, cultivated by servants, supply the market of the capital, and thus afford a revenue to the proprietors. It is to one of these mansions that we would transport the imagination of our readers; and as this power—namely, the imagination—is lord of time as well as of space, we shall expect it to bear us company as far back as a period of sixty years ago, when Paraguay was under the sway of a Spanish governor appointed by the viceroy of Buenos Ayres. At that time there stood,

about a league north of the little city of Assumption, a dwelling of small dimensions—in fact a mere cottage—but beautifully situated, and surrounded by fields of sugar-cane, maize, tobacco, and cotton, all in full cultivation. The house was built, after the fashion of the country, of sun-dried bricks, covered with plaster, and whitewashed. Along the front was a deep veranda, the pillars of which were slender stems of forest trees, stripped of their branches and bark, and whitewashed, but with many rough knots and inequalities where the boughs had been hewn off. These served to sustain the vines which, planted at their feet, ascended with many a winding clasp, and covered them with their luxuriant leaves. Then, reaching the roof of the veranda, the vines spread and interlaced, until the whole was buried in a mass of verdant foliage, which contrasted beautifully with the snow-white walls of the cottage and the ruddy tiles of the sloping eaves. In the rear of the cottage was a long, low building, appropriated to the servants and the offices, and extending to a *corral*, or enclosure, in which the cattle and horses were kept. Directly in front of the porch were two tall trees, of the tatayiba, or wild mulberry, with slender stems and a profusion of light, glossy leaves; while before and on each side of the house was an orchard, or it might rather be called a thicket, of fruit-trees. The broad dark leaf of the fig hardly allowed its abundant fruit, in all stages of growth, to meet the eye, but the sunny orange and yellow lime gleamed from the depths of their verdant canopy, like—to use the odd but striking simile of honest Andrew Marvell—

'Like golden lamps in a green night.'

It was late in the evening. The full unclouded moon

shone on the scene here described, lighting up the white walls of the humble cottage and the verdant masses of the orange grove. The tall sugar-cane and the rustling maize-stalks waved their tasselled heads and slender leaves in the soft night-wind. Now and then might be heard the sullen hooting of a distant owl, or the harsh scream of a paroquet disturbed in its uneasy slumbers. All other sounds were hushed. The cattle were asleep in the corral, the fowls at roost on their accustomed trees. From the darkness and silence which prevailed, it appeared that all the inhabitants of the cottage were at rest, except in one room, which was lighted up, and into which we will make bold to enter. It was very simply furnished, as is usual throughout Spanish America. The brick floor was covered with fine straw matting. To the whitewashed walls were fastened a few ordinary pictures and engravings. Some light cane-chairs were placed around the room, and at the farther end was an elevated dais or *estrada*, covered with the skins of the jaguar and puma, and serving as a lounge for visitors, or a couch for the siesta or afternoon nap. In the centre of the room was a table, made of the wood of the urandig-pitai, a native tree equal to the finest rosewood. Two candles stood upon it, and numerous papers—some folded, and tied with tape, others open—were scattered over it.

A young man sat beside the table, deeply engaged in the perusal of one of the documents. He was dressed like a wealthy *haçiendado*, or gentleman-farmer. His jacket of blue cloth was adorned with silver buttons, hanging by little chains of an inch in length. His vest of white satin, elegantly tamboured, was open so as to shew the embroidered front of his cambric shirt. His green velvet small-clothes, tied round the waist by a blue satin sash, were loose at the

knee, allowing the ruffled ends of his muslin drawers to appear beneath them. They were met by white cotton stockings, and buskin boots of untanned horse-skin. The age of the wearer was apparently about twenty-five. He had the brown complexion, the dark eyes, the black, glossy hair, the thick beard and moustaches, which were proper to his Spanish descent. His handsome features wore an expression of deep sadness, and his brow was occasionally knit, as with indignation, while his eye glanced over the paper which he held. Just behind him, in another chair, but leaning on the back of his, with her eyes fixed earnestly on his face, sat a young woman of extreme beauty both of form and feature. It was a style of beauty, too, which is commonly thought peculiar to northern, or rather to cold climates, but which is, in fact, frequently seen in the interior of South America. Her chestnut hair clustered in natural ringlets round her fair face, and her dark blue eyes looked out with changeable lustre from beneath their long brown eyelashes. Her slender form, betokening extreme youth, was attired in a simple robe of white muslin, bound at the waist by a ribbon, which was clasped with a golden buckle. It was easy to see that the natural expression of her countenance was bright and cheerful, as of one accustomed to a life of great happiness; but at this moment her look was constrained and anxious, and her eyes were fixed earnestly upon the young man, whose attention was engrossed by the manuscripts. At last she spoke, as if unable to endure the silence.

'Do you think there is any hope, Enrique?'

The young man started, and throwing from him the papers which he held, exclaimed in a tone of mournful bitterness: 'What a fool am I to pore over these

long-winded pleas, rejoinders, judgments, and all their legal trash, as if they could have any influence on my cause! Do I not know that it was lost from the beginning! It is gold that has done it all—bribery, corruption! The pleading of an angel would not avail against such arguments. We are lost—utterly ruined!'

'Surely, Enrique,' replied his companion, 'the judge cannot allow his friendship for Don Manuel to bias him to so frightful a degree? All the city knows that Prieto's claim to your patrimony is utterly unfounded; and your evidence, too, is so strong.'

'Listen, Rosita,' said the young man, 'to what I heard this morning from my friend Gomez. How Gomez learned the facts, he would not inform me; but he assured me that I might rely upon them. A year ago, when Don Manuel Prieto gave his daughter in marriage to young Echeverria, he said to him: "Carlos, choose which you will of my houses in town, or my estates in the country, for your residence, and it is yours." Echeverria answered: "I will not rob you of any of your splendid residences or your great plantations. Give me only a little cottage, with an orchard and a few fields about it, like that of Enrique Gonsalez, and I shall be happy." Then Prieto said: "If that be all you require, you shall have the very house and farm you speak of." Thereupon he came to me and offered me a large price for the property—its full worth, and even more. I refused, instantly and positively, to sell my patrimony, which was endeared to me by the recollections of childhood. Why should I part with it at any price? Besides, Rosita, it was at that very time that I was preparing to lead you, my lovely, blushing bride, from your own happy home to the house of my fathers. Was that a time to sell my

homestead? I told the old man flatly that all his fortune would not tempt me. Now, this is what I learn from Gomez. When Prieto returned home, he was bursting with fury at his failure, inasmuch as he had given his word to his son-in-law, and had expected that his doubloons would accomplish everything. He swore a solemn oath, that if it cost him his whole fortune, he would have my house and land, and that I should yet beg of him a pittance to save me from starvation.'

'Santa Maria!—Blessed Virgin! Can this be?' exclaimed the young wife in astonishment.

'This—this,' continued Gonsalez, 'is the origin of this sudden and outrageous suit, which at first I considered to be intended only for my annoyance, and as a mode of petty revenge. But it now appears too clearly that he is determined to push it to extremity; and his measures have been taken with such consummate skill, that no resource is left to me. The judge is gained. Every advocate has his retaining fee. I have even begun to doubt my own paid lawyer, Ramirez, who has suddenly become very cautious and cold.'

'Ramirez! He leagued with the enemy! O Enrique, surely your suspicions mislead you?'

'I fear—I greatly fear: at all events he gives me no hope.'

'And is there no one,' asked Rosita, 'whom you can trust?'

'Not one of the whole court,' replied her husband in a tone of despair. 'The only advocate who cannot be bribed, and of whom alwyers and judges alike stand in awe, has long been my implacable enemy.'

'The Dr Francia?'

'Yes; ever since that unhappy affair of Gomez and Paredes. I remember well the terrible scowl he wore when he said to me: "You have wilfully crossed my path; you have injured one who never forgets a favour or an offence." Since that time, he has done all in his power—openly and fairly, I admit—to thwart, annoy, and injure me. Nor have I been slow, I confess it, to retaliate. He is an intimate friend of Prieto's. Oh, how he must exult in my approaching ruin!'

'Not, surely,' said Rosita, 'if he be the honest, upright man he is proclaimed to be. His integrity must revolt at such injustice.'

'There are many esteemed very honest,' replied Gonsalez, 'who will rejoice in a result attained by evil means, provided they are not responsible for the evil-doing. But,' he continued, rising from his chair, and pacing the room with hasty steps, 'what is it to me who exults or who laments over my unhappy fate? What is certain is, that in three days we are driven forth, to beg or starve, from this house, in which I fondly hoped to spend a long and happy life with thee, my beloved. Ah, Rosita! what day-dreams have been mine of the pleasant future which awaited us here, but which will never be ours to enjoy! It is not for myself that I grieve; I can struggle with the current. But when I think that I have drawn you from the peaceful shelter of your paternal roof in Villa Rica to this distant city, to share in my desperate fortunes, I am ready to go mad with remorse and rage.'

'And this is the way you treat me!' replied the young wife in an offended tone. 'When I, poor, foolish creature, was thinking that my presence and my love would be some alleviation to your misfortune, you do your best to distress

me by calling them an aggravation. Come here, sir,' she continued, seizing him by the hand, and pulling him with gentle force to a chair by her side—'sit down by me, you treacherous man, and tell me what you married me for. Was it only to have me in your house like a great doll, prettily dressed, for a plaything and a show? Or was it merely that I might keep you company, and entertain your friends in *tertulias*,* and make your *maté*,† and see that your clothes were in order, and your dinners well cooked? No, sir; your *ama de llaves*‡ did these things quite as well as I. Well, then, was it to be your helpmate, to love you in joy and in sorrow, to comfort you, to toil for you, to pray for you, to believe that there was no unhappiness where you were, and to make you believe so too? O Enrique! you do not know me. You are a man: well, am not I a woman?'

'You are an angel, I believe,' said Enrique, interrupting her rapid speech by clasping her round the waist.

'Let me alone. I say I am a woman; and are there not poor women as well as poor men? And do not women have to toil and suffer as much as men? Yes, truly, and a great deal more. Now, Enrique,' said the lovely pleader, leaning with her clasped hands on her husband's shoulder, and looking fondly in his face, 'listen to my plan, which I have formed while you were poring over your musty papers. When we leave our dear home, which I shall regret as much as you, for I have had my day-dreams too, Enrique'—and a tear, unbidden, stood in her bright blue eye—'but

* Evening parties.

† Paraguay tea, made from the leaves of a tree peculiar to that country.

‡ Housekeeper; literally, mistress of keys.

when we leave it, you shall hire a little hut, and a little piece of ground, such as we can find for twenty dollars a year, like that which old Antonio lives in—the old mulatto, who talks all the time with his Indian wife, who never says anything: just like me, you know.'

'But where are we to find our twenty dollars, you dear little St Tacita?' interrupted Enrique, smiling in spite of himself.

'Hush with your impertinent inquisitions! You are worse than a lawyer. Why, my ear-rings are worth more than sixty dollars; so there is three years' rent at once. You shall cultivate the ground, and raise your yams, your maize, and your pine-apples, your water-melons and your musk-melons, your sugar-cane, and, above all, your cotton; while I shall take care of the house—which won't be much, you know; and then I will pick and card your cotton, and spin and weave it, and cut it, and make it up, and tambour it so, that the governor himself shall be only too happy to give a hundred dollars for a shirt from my fingers. Moreover, every Saturday I will go into the market, like the other *paisanas*,* with my donkey, and my panniers filled with all the good fruits that you will raise, and all the nice and pretty things that I can make—my tarts and pies, my bouquets, my toys and *cigarrillos*!† Ah, I think I see myself in a corner of the market-house, in my white petticoat and embroidered vest, with my little *rebozo*‡ on my head, seated in state on my mat, with all my wares

* Peasant women.

† Little cigars made of tobacco cut fine, and wrapped in a slip of paper or maize leaf.

‡ A sort of scarf, thrown over the head or round the neck at the pleasure of the wearer.

about me. I am sure I shall draw all the custom. Buy a water-melon, senor? Buy my candles, senorita—elegant mould candles? Here 's your nice new-laid eggs! Here 's your beautiful onions! Here 's your fine white yams—yams—yams! Ah, buy a pie, ma'am, baked this morning, I assure you; or a bunch of elegant flowers, for the dear good saint;* or a sweet pretty little doll for the charming little senorita; or a little whip for the dear little senorito to whip his beautiful little horse with?' The lively Rosita mimicked so admirably the tones and manner of the market-women of Assumption, that her husband shouted 'Bravo!' and clapped his hands, and laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks. It was a delightful scene; and it ended by his clasping once more his lovely wife to his bosom, and thanking Heaven that he had one treasure of which Prieto could not deprive him.

At this moment they were startled by a loud knock at the outer door. 'Who can it be at this hour?' said Enrique.

'Some messenger from the city, perhaps,' replied his wife. —'Here, Rossi,' she said, opening the door of the apartment, 'go and see who it is that knocks.'

Rossi, their trusty mulatto servant, who was nodding in the passage, arose, rubbed his eyes, yawned, and proceeded to obey the commands of his mistress. He returned in a minute with his eyes wide open, and every trace of drowsiness banished by consternation. 'O senor! O mistress!' he stammered; 'it is that man, Dr Francia! Shall I let him in?'

* It is common throughout Spanish America to have an image of the patron saint in the best room of the house, and great care is taken in dressing and adorning it with jewels and garlands.

Rossi knew well the inveterate enmity between his master and the doctor, which was indeed notorious to all the city and neighbourhood. 'Dr Francia!' exclaimed Gonsalez, no less astonished, and much perplexed. 'What can he want with me?'

'Perhaps he comes from Don Manuel to propose some compromise,' suggested his wife. 'Pray, see him by all means.'

'Well, Rossi, desire the doctor to enter. We shall know our fate.'

Rossi returned to the door, and shortly afterwards a hasty step was heard in the passage, and the person of whom they spoke entered the room. His tall erect form was clad from head to foot in scholastic black, with the exception of his ample cloak of crimson cloth, which was wrapped around his shoulders after the Spanish fashion. He might be above forty years of age. His face was long, with strongly marked features; thin lips firmly closed, dark piercing eyes, and a swarthy complexion, but with that peculiar tinge of sallowness acquired by close confinement and study. His dark hair was drawn back from his capacious forehead, and fell in heavy masses on his shoulders. His whole physiognomy conveyed a strong impression of intellect and firmness. He waited for no salutation, but spoke at once. 'Senor Don Enrique, I know that my presence here is as unwelcome as it is unexpected.'

'I am honoured,' began Gonsalez; but the doctor interrupted him with a hasty motion of the hand.

'I do not come to bandy compliments, senor, but on an errand of duty. You are now engaged in a suit with my *friend* Don Manuel Prieto'—he pronounced the word 'friend' with a strong emphasis—'by which you are about

to lose this house and estate. From what I learn, it appears that his suit is an atrocious outrage on law and justice, and is likely to be gained by a violation of every legal and honest principle. Is this the truth, senor?'

'It is,' replied Gonsalez eagerly, 'as surely as that there is a just God in heaven!'

'This must not be, Don Enrique,' replied Dr Francia. 'I cannot allow the law, that noble science to which I have devoted my life, to be so perverted to an engine of fraud and oppression. I am the friend of Don Manuel; I am, and shall ever be, your enemy. But I am more the friend of right, and the enemy of wrong. I offer you my services. Will you trust me with your cause?'

'With my life!' exclaimed Gonsalez, astonished and overjoyed. 'O senor, under what a load of obligation do you lay me!'

'Under none,' returned the lawyer hastily. 'I serve the cause of justice. We are enemies now and ever!'

'Surely, senor, not now?' exclaimed Rosita. 'Not after this?'

'Madam,' replied the doctor coldly, 'neither my friendships nor my enmities are like a cloak, to be put on and off at pleasure, and thrown aside when worn out.—These, I perceive, are your documents,' he continued, sweeping from the table the pile of papers which lay upon it, and collecting them under his arm within his cloak. 'Have no further anxiety, Don Enrique; your cause is safe. I do not think that Don Pedro de Sarmiento will dare to trifle with *me!*' he said proudly, drawing up his stately form to its full height. 'Let him beware: if he turns to the right or left, he is lost. Judge of appeal as he is, royal auditor as he styles himself, I will drag him from his seat to ignominy

and ruin. What! is it come to this, that a corrupt judge and venal advocates shall twist the law with impunity to their own vile ends, and rob us of our fortunes without redress? I, José Gaspar Francia, say that this thing shall not be. Farewell, sir; I repeat it, your patrimony is safe. Adieu, madam; I kiss your feet;' and bowing with ceremonious politeness, the great lawyer abruptly turned, and departed as hastily as he had come. He left behind him glad hearts and joyous countenances.

'How much better are the grim doctor's acts than his words!' said Rosita. 'Surely he cannot be in earnest when he speaks of enmity?'

'Dr Francia seldom speaks in jest,' replied Enrique; 'but what matters his enmity after this? I defy him to do me as much harm hereafter as he now does me good!'

Ill-founded confidence! Alas! there came a time when Gonsalez would have given house and land, and all his hopes of worldly prosperity, to buy even the miserable boon of eternal banishment from the country in which Dr Francia dwelt!

SCENE THE SECOND.

Twelve years have elapsed since the scene just described. We must now ask our readers to accompany us to the Casa de Gobierno, or government house, in the city of Assumption, the capital of the free and independent republic of Paraguay. It is a large low edifice of whitewashed brick, with no pretensions to elegance or state. At one extremity of it is a room of moderate size, very poorly furnished. A long table which occupied the upper end, close to the wall, supported a double row of books, and several astronomical and surveying instruments. At a small round table, in the centre of

the room, was seated a youth of pleasing intelligent appearance, engaged in writing; while a tall elderly man, dressed in black, but with a crimson cloak thrown around his shoulders, walked slowly up and down the room in deep thought. It was Francia, no longer a simple doctor of laws and advocate, but, by the election of his fellow-citizens, and the force of his indomitable will, supreme dictator of Paraguay, the absolute ruler of the country. There was little change to be perceived in his appearance, except that his hair was slightly grizzled, and his countenance gloomier than ever. At length the young man ceased writing, and after glancing timidly towards the stern dictator, as if to ask permission, he said: 'May it please your excellency, the letter is finished.'

'Read it,' said Francia.

The young man read the document, which was a letter directed to the public authorities of Buenos Ayres, positively refusing to enter into any treaty, either of commerce or alliance, with them. When he had concluded, the dictator said: 'Very good. Transcribe it, and bring it to me for my signature. You have a good style, Villarino, and your compositions please me.'

'Ah, your excellency,' stammered the youth, much gratified by a speech of commendation from his stern master, 'if the supremo would but allow me to speak.'

'Well, what is it?' inquired Francia, turning and directing a piercing gaze at his secretary.

'I am proud to obey your excellency's commands, whatever they may be,' said the young man; 'but may I not venture to express a wish that my honoured master would regard the foreign policy of our country in a somewhat different light?'

'Well, go on!' said the dictator in a deep harsh tone, observing that the secretary hesitated.

'I shall be miserable if I offend your excellency,' continued the young man; 'I only thought, that possibly, without perplexing ourselves by foreign alliances, we might cultivate an advantageous commerce by exchanging our surplus productions for their cheap and useful wares.'

'Have you finished your lecture?' inquired Francia with a tone of bitter sarcasm, and a ferocious scowl.

'Ah, pardon!—pardon!' exclaimed the unhappy youth; 'I meant not to offend.'

'When I took you for my secretary,' continued the unrelenting dictator, 'and favoured you by my countenance, I trusted that you had at least the sense not to burn your fingers by thrusting them wilfully into the fire. So you are a political economist, senor! and aspire to be a partner in my government. Do you know how I treat such intermeddlers?'

'Pardon my folly, my lord!' cried the youth, still more and more terrified. 'I will never offend again!'

'Out! away with you!' thundered Francia, stamping violently on the floor. 'Quit my presence now and for ever! Remain in your house till further orders. I will take care that you never repeat the offence.'

The unfortunate secretary slunk terror-stricken from the room, while the excited dictator paced up and down like an enraged tiger in his lair. His eyes glared, and his brow was knit. 'Shall I never find a tool,' he said, 'who will not erect himself into an adviser?' Suddenly the door opened. 'Ha! thou villain, wouldst thou assassinate me?' cried the despot, rushing to the table, on which lay two loaded pistols and a drawn sword.

'Oh, Senor Excellentissimo, it is only your poor servant,' said the new-comer in a piteous tone, dropping on his knees; 'I thought I heard your lordship's excellency bid me enter.'

'Ha, Estevan! is it thou? Beware how thou rushest so hastily into my presence, or thou mayest chance to repent it with a bullet in thy fat carcass. Well, what news?'

The person addressed was a little, plump, round-faced man, with an air of good humour and sly cunning on his oily features. He might be, from his appearance, a small shopkeeper, or perhaps a publican. Scratching his head, as if to collect his scattered senses from the shock of his first reception, he replied: 'I have not much to tell your excellency, but I learn that Don Domingo Saavedra and Don Vicente Valdez meet frequently, and in private, at the house of Don Fernando Pinto.'

'Ha! well, that corresponds!' said Francia. 'What more?'

'Manuel Artigas says, that if you compel him to pull down his house to form your new street, he shall expect compensation.'

'He shall have it—free lodgings in the public prison. I will have no grumblings at my plans for the improvement of my capital. Anything more?'

'The old Pelado says that you can drive out the Franciscans to-day, but your own turn may come to-morrow.'

'He says so?—the scoundrel! I have long borne with his mutinous expressions. Good! No one suspects you of communicating with me, Estevan?'

'No, your excellency; thanks to my little office and my management.'

'Well, go! Be faithful, and you shall meet with your reward.'

The spy departed, and the dictator ringing a bell, a sergeant of the guard entered. 'Sergeant,' said Francia, 'you will take a file of men, and arrest Manuel Artigas without delay, and commit him to the public prison. This will serve him for lodgings while his house is pulled down, and teach him discretion. Tell him so. You will then proceed to seize the old Spaniard, Ruiz Palacios, commonly called the Pelado; iron him with a double bar, and have him ready for the banquillo * to-morrow morning, as a warning for all traitors.'

'Yes, your excellency. I have to report that the French merchant, Latour, is at the point of death. He is with his family at the house of his father-in-law, Don Pedro Cortina.'

'Very well. Place a guard in the dwelling, and also in his warehouse, and the moment he dies, seize his property for the use of the state. Our treasury is getting low; and whatever happens, my faithful troops, who love me like children, shall not want their pay. You may go, sergeant.'

The soldier departed on his errands of terror, enchanted with the favour shewn by his master to the body to which he belonged, and by means of which the crafty despot secured his ascendency over his fellow-citizens, and maintained his arbitrary power. A low knock was then heard; and after a reiterated command to enter, the door was gently opened, and a man appeared, dressed in the garb of a cura, or parish priest. His face was pale, and his look constrained and downcast.

'Well, Pai † Melindez, what word from your penitent?' inquired the supremo.

* The 'little bench' or stool on which criminals are seated for execution.

† *Pai*, which signifies 'father' in the Guarani or native Paraguayan tongue, is the term by which priests are usually addressed in that country.

'Dona Teresa informs me that, from the expressions let fall by her lover, she is more than ever convinced that some plot is going on in which Saavedra and Vicente Valdez are concerned. But she cannot acquire any certainty with regard to their designs.'

'Have you warned her that her salvation depends on bringing you a full and accurate report of all she sees and hears on the subject?'

'Yes, your excellency.'

'Well, then, I warn you, Pai Melindez, that your salvation—do you understand?—depends on your bringing me a full report of all you see and hear on that and every other subject.'

'Yes, your excellency; I endeavour to do my duty,' answered the poor priest submissively. 'I was this evening at the country-house of Don Enrique Gonsalez, where there was a large tertulia, to celebrate the recovery of his charming wife, after the birth of their fourth child. A lovely family is that of Don Enrique.'

'Pah!' interrupted the dictator with a scowl. 'What is this trash about lovely children and charming wives, with which you are stuffing my ears? Beware, Senor Cura; tell me what is important for me to know, and remember that I have other sources of information to check you if you play me false.'

'Don Enrique spoke of your excellency, and of the noble manner in which you rescued his patrimony from the clutches of his villainous enemies.'

'Ha! well?'

'He said that he could not conceive how the Dictator Francia and Dr Francia the advocate should be the same man.'

'Don Enrique has a feeble imagination,' said the despot in a dry sarcastic tone. 'Well, what else? There was more of it?'

'Yes, your excellency,' replied the unhappy priest, twitching at the sleeve of his cassock, and hesitating with a look of distress: 'he said that if you continued to add to your prisons, and the number of their inmates, you would shortly not have subjects at large sufficient to guard those in confinement.'

'He said that!' exclaimed Francia, pausing for a moment. 'The fool! The senseless, babbling idiot! I have spared him so long, because I considered him too weak an enemy to deserve more than contempt. And yet, not appreciating my clemency, he must talk!—must express his idle, worthless opinions about my state policy, and do his best to excite disaffection against me. He shall learn, and his associates shall take warning, that I have yet faithful subjects enough to keep watch over all traitors. Begone, Sir Priest!'

The curate departed, and the little tinkling bell summoned a sentinel, whom Francia directed to call the Captain Orbegoso. In a few minutes the captain made his appearance —a ruffianly-looking soldier, with immense whiskers and moustaches, and dressed in a blue uniform, with red facings, a blue sash, and epaulets. He held in his hand a letter, which the dictator instantly remarked.

'Ah! A petition from my children—my soldiers?' he inquired.

'No, your excellency; it is a letter which was found on the table of poor Villarino. They have just brought his body home from the river.'

'What! drowned?' exclaimed Francia astonished; and snatching the letter, he tore it open, and read as follows:

'TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE SUPREME DICTATOR.

'It is now two years since your excellency deigned to cast your eyes on me, and consider my poor abilities worthy of your service. I appeal with confidence to your excellency to attest the fidelity, the assiduity with which I have devoted myself to the duties of my office. For a single inconsiderate observation, intended for the benefit not less of your government than of our common country, I am driven from your presence, and threatened with the same doom which has overtaken so many worthier citizens before me. I understood but too well the meaning of your excellency's last words. But the name of Villarino shall never, through me, be sullied by the infamy of the banquillo or the state-prison. I do but anticipate my fate, which was sure to overtake me. I spare you the annoyance—may I say the pain?—of directing my punishment. In return, I will venture to hope that, if hereafter any member of my family should be so unfortunate as to incur your displeasure, you will pardon him, remembering that you have already had one voluntary victim in the unhappy JOAQUIM VILLARINO.'

The letter fell from the hands of the dictator. An unwonted expression of regret lingered for a moment on his harsh countenance; but it soon passed away, and recovering himself, he observed, loud enough for the captain to hear him: 'The poor fool must needs meddle with matters above his sphere; and finding that his impertinence offends me, he sees fit to leap into the river. Well, so be it. Perhaps he is right. He has saved me trouble. Sooner or later, it must have come to this. No government can endure the officious interference of unqualified subjects, and it is

necessary,' he continued, looking steadily at the officer, who quailed beneath his glance, 'to repress it by any means whatsoever.—Orbegoso, you will take with you twenty dragoons, and proceed to the house of Don Enrique Gonsalez: arrest him instantly; drag him, if need be, out of his bed; convey him to the prison in your barracks; have him heavily fettered, and place him in the dungeon heretofore occupied by Pedro Garcia, who died this morning. There let him rot, as a warning to all impertinent babblers who cannot restrain their tongues from wagging on forbidden subjects. Go!'

The officer made his obeisance, and departed. The dictator, seating himself quietly at the table, lighted a cigar, and was soon absorbed in a book, utterly regardless of the misery which in a few short hours he had spread around him.

Some of our readers may share in the doubt of poor Gonsalez—whether it can be possible that the bold, upright, incorruptible advocate described in the first of these scenes, could have become the heartless wily dictator, the suspicious tyrant, who has just been seen ruling a miserable people through the agency of hireling troops, of degraded spies, of jailors and executioners, and all the customary apparatus of despotism. Those of them, however, who have read the admirable *Letters on Paraguay* by the Messrs Robertson, will be aware that all the important incidents of the narrative are strictly true; the only liberties here taken with them being in the minor details and descriptive portions of the story. The Dictator Francia is one of a long list of examples which prove the baneful effect of arbitrary power on the possessor. Before he became the ruler of Paraguay, he was esteemed the only man in the country fitted to govern

it—so high was the confidence in his sagacity, his firmness, and, above all, his integrity. Had he not been trusted with unlimited command, it is probable that he would have made a most excellent executive governor. But having once acquired a dictatorial power, his unbounded pride and ambition incited him to use every effort to retain it. Then followed a prætorian soldiery, an all-pervading espionage, severe exactions to supply a failing treasury—rebellions, conspiracies, proscriptions—the dungeon, the torture, the ignominious death. Such, by the teaching of history, and the experience of all nations, is the regular and inevitable sequence of results which flow from the establishment of an irresponsible authority. No benevolence is so hearty, no honesty so pure, no humility so lowly, as not to yield at last to the engrossing sway of the passion for domination. It is therefore no exaggeration to say that the restraints of constitutional forms are, at least, quite as valuable to rulers as to their subjects; for if the latter have to fear the injurious effects of arbitrary power upon their external and temporal prosperity, the former have still more to dread its subtle and lasting influence upon themselves.

THE CONVICT'S DAUGHTER.

'I know that all men hate my father;
And therefore, Javan, must his daughter's love—
Her dutiful, her deep, her fervent love—
Make up to his forlorn and desolate heart
The forfeited affections of his kind.'—MILMAN.

THE following narrative is borrowed from the interesting work of M. Maurice Alhoy on the Convict Prisons of France:

'It is now some years,' says this writer, 'since I passed several months in the town of Rochefort. It became my daily habit to walk in the gloomy avenues of the public garden, and there I used to watch the convicts as they worked in pairs, carrying heavy burdens, and gladly purchasing, by the performance of the most laborious tasks, the favour of being allowed to escape for a few hours from the pestilential atmosphere of the prison. I had remarked a young girl who passed before me several times, casting an anxious and longing look towards the building in which the ropeworks were carried on. The young girl wore the

Vendean costume. She seated herself upon a bench under the trees, and remained apparently lost in thought. I approached and recognised her. I had seen her the preceding evening at the house of the gatekeeper, and had then been informed of the object of her journey. The young girl was engaged to be married, and her father was in the convict prison. Eutrope, the peasant to whom she was betrothed, was acquainted with the guilt of his future father-in-law, for the same village had been their home. He was conscious how much he might lose in the esteem of others by marrying the daughter of a convict; but Tiennette was beloved, and Eutrope's affection for her made him shut his eyes to the possibility that any painful result might arise from their union.

'He wished to marry the companion of his childhood; but he desired that this father, who in the eyes of the law was dead, who had no longer any right over his daughter, and whose remembrance it was well to banish, should no more be spoken of. Tiennette loved her father, and the contempt with which others regarded the author of her days, only redoubled the fond affection of his daughter. She was desirous that he should sign her marriage-contract, and bestow upon her a father's blessing. Eutrope had long resisted this wish of Tiennette; he still objected to the step she proposed to take; and it was with an unwilling heart he undertook with her the journey to Rochefort. Eutrope was a good-looking youth, with frank and open manners, and of a prepossessing appearance. It was not long before he joined us, after making some purchases which had detained him for a time from his betrothed.

'I took upon myself to interpret to him the wishes of Tiennette. I told Eutrope that a father is never guilty in

the eyes of his daughter; that no laws, judges, or juries can unloose the ties of nature; and that the filial piety of Tiennette ought to be considered by him as a precious pledge of the virtues of his future wife. The girl did not speak, but her eyes were fastened on the countenance of Eutrope. She watched its every movement, as if to gather from them his acquiescence in her desire. Eutrope listened to me with his eyes fixed upon the ground. When I had done speaking, he made me no reply, offered no objection, but took the arm of Tiennette within his own, and together the young couple turned their steps towards the prison. I followed them, and the poor girl, who seemed to consider my presence as useful in confirming the vacillating resolutions of her lover, encouraged me by her looks to remain with them. We found on our arrival that the aged convict had been ill for some days; he was no longer in the prison, but had been conveyed to the hospital. We silently traversed the long court, and mounted the staircase. When we reached the entrance of the wards, the young girl trembled violently, her cheeks became deadly pale, and her heart seemed to sink within her. Eutrope and Tiennette were permitted to approach the prisoner's bed; but I was refused admittance by the turnkey, and I could only see from a distance the remainder of this touching scene. At the foot of the convict's bed stood Eutrope, whilst Tiennette approached her father with an expression of fearfulness which she vainly strove to conceal. He raised his languid head, turned his dimmed eye upon his child, and a faint smile passed over his sun-burned countenance. The turnkey who had introduced the two young people into the ward, remained gazing upon the scene; a good Sister of Charity supported the sick man; he took the pen which was handed

him, glanced over the marriage-contract, which had been prepared beforehand, and wrote beneath it his dishonoured name. Then stretching towards Tiennette his wasted arms, he clasped her to his bosom. The movement he made in doing so shook his chain, one link of which rested in the hand of Eutrope, who looked at it with a bewildered stare; whilst another rustled against the dress of Tiennette, whose tears fell upon the rusty iron. The head of the dying man soon sunk once more upon his pillow. Tiennette took advantage of this moment to glide her trembling hand furtively under the coverlet. The turnkey had that instant turned to lead the way out of the room, and the anxious glance she fixed upon him betrayed to me alone the poor girl's secret offering to her father. Eutrope, who seemed ill at ease, made a sign to Tiennette, and they both went slowly out, with downcast looks. When they had reached the foot of the staircase which led to the wards, the young girl said to Eutrope: "The step which we have now taken will bring us a blessing." They then entered together the chapel of the Civil Hospital, offered up a short prayer, bade me farewell, and mounted a little cart, which bore them back to their native village.

'Yes, God will bless thee, poor maiden, who didst not forsake the author of thy days, nor think that his guilt had broken every tie which subsisted between thee and him! Thy children will pay to thy virtue the dutiful homage with which thou hast not feared to honour a guilty father!'

A NIGHT AT HOME.

BY LEITCH RITCHIE.

WHEN I was still only on the threshold of manhood, I found myself a unit in the mighty population of London, and it is hardly possible to convey an adequate idea of the loneliness of my condition. In a desert island one may be solitary enough, but the feeling of solitude cannot always be present; whereas in London, even the measureless and endless crowd which the provincial sees whirling around him, is a constant remembrancer that he is *alone*—

> 'Alone, alone, all, all alone,
> Alone on the wide, wide sea.'

When little more than a boy, I had said to my mother, with the hero of many a fairy tale: 'Mother, bake me a bannock, and roast me a collop, and I will go and push my fortune!' And my mother, who never could refuse me anything, and who, besides, had a strong notion that the

Metropolis was the best field for such preternatural talents as mine, had readily, though tearfully, complied. I was, then, in London, without a friend, without an acquaintance, without a prospect; and (my resultless letters of introduction being all delivered) I felt sometimes as if I were a shadow moving among substantial forms, and sometimes as if the world around me, and all that it inherit, were but the phantasmagoria of a dream.

One day, when going into my lodgings, I found that a hackney-coach had stopped at the door, and I looked with languid curiosity into the window of the vehicle. The passengers were an elderly lady and gentleman, and a young woman, apparently their daughter; and I observed them with the more attention, that I thought I heard them pronounce my name as they gave a packet to the coachman to deliver at the house. Not that I thought it was really my name—that was impossible; for although I sometimes received letters by the post, the post is not one of the persons of society like people who come in hackney-coaches, and I was known in the house only as the young gentleman in the two-pair. But the surprising coincidence of the sound resembling my own name made me look fixedly at those who pronounced the word; and in fact I continued to look—and to see what I looked at too—long after the hackney-coach had disappeared.

It was the young woman who had chiefly arrested my attention; and the circumstance was owing to her appearing in the likeness of an ideal being that had haunted me for years. I thought I knew her, just as one frequently recognises a scene beheld for the first time as something already garnered in his memory. It is usual to talk of such matters as 'recollections of a former state of existence,' but my

perceptions were not of so dreamy a nature. The young woman was a piece of flesh and blood, belonging exclusively to this present world—and so was I; and besides, it turned out that she had actually brought me a packet from my mother, a service which as yet had been rendered me only by the post.

To some persons it will seem ridiculous that my thoughts continued from that moment to dwell upon the young woman; but the fact is, the phantoms of my imagination resolved into her, and she became like a religious image in whose material form men worship ideas of beauty and holiness. I was just in that state of solitude which is favourable to such superstitions; and so conscious was I withal, that I never could bring myself to ask my mother a direct question about the bearers of her packet.

My mother, on her part, gave herself no trouble to understand the hints with which I coasted round the delicate subject, for indeed she had other and far more pressing calls upon her ingenuity. The affairs of our family had been going back for some years, ever since my father's death, and our moderate property was much diminished by litigation. The few freehold acres, however, on which our unpretending, but genteel and comfortable house was built, were still entire; and these we determined to preserve to perpetuity; and in order that we might do so more conveniently, to grant some building leases if we could find tenants. All these matters were discussed at full in my mother's letters; but, to say the truth, I found them neither very interesting nor very intelligible. All I knew was, that I was to make a fortune somehow or other for myself; that my paternal acres were to be multiplied threefold; and that I was to meet again the lady of the hackney-coach. This was clear

enough, although I sometimes wondered how it was to begin to come about; and so I went on dreaming, and castle-building, and growing more and more solitary every day, till at length I was recalled home, for the purpose of commencing in Scotland—under the auspices of some relations, since I could not manage it myself—the serious business of life.

I left London without regret. The young woman was but an idea, and that was easily transported. The Egeria of the two-pair could haunt me as well in the north as in the south; nay, much better in a room trellised with woodbine, and looking over a romantic river, than in a bare brick box, staring for ever and ever with its dead eyes at other bare brick boxes staring at it.

A journey like mine was no trifle at that epoch, especially to one who travelled, for the sake of economy, night and day on the top of the coach; and by the time we had completed two-thirds of the last hundred miles, I had some doubt as to whether I should ever recover the use of my cold cramped limbs. We were now resting for breakfast at an inn which was only thirty miles in a straight line from the place for which I was bound; but the distance was still greater to the town where the coach stopped, and where I should require to pass the night, if I completed my journey by the vehicle. It occurred to me that a walk of thirty miles, which I had never considered a hardship, would, under present circumstances, be a blessed relief; and I pleased myself likewise with picturing the joyful surprise my sudden appearance would give my mother, who did not expect me till the following day. Having made the necessary arrangements, therefore, with the coachman about my luggage, I bade adieu to my fellow-travellers without

regret, and striking into a by-road, commenced my solitary journey.

It was some time before I recovered the free use of my limbs; but the morning was fine, and the air bracing, and by-and-by I felt a sensation of enjoyment to which I had long been a stranger. The road led through a finely varied country, where hill and valley, woods and waters, were intermingled in endless succession. It was quite a field-day for a dreamer like me; for in such circumstances the thoughts receive an unconscious impulse from the scenery, and assume new forms and colours with the changes of nature. I felt this when the finer part of the route terminated in an extensive moor, for gradually the *couleur de rose* which had tinted my imagination faded away into the sombre hue of the desert. The secret perhaps was, that I was tired. For more than a year, my only exercise had been in street-rambling; and the heights and hollows of this mountain path, after a few hours' stout walking, tried me severely. Then it came on to rain; and being without the slightest shelter on the moor, I was soon wet to the skin. This would have been a trifle; but as it was necessary, whether wet or dry, to rest, I sat down after the rain was over; and at length got up, stiff, shivering, lame, and faint. The fact was now obvious: the unaccustomed journey had been too much for me—I was unwell; and instead of having to wander on, for a dozen miles more, over a wild and dreary road, I felt that it would be better if I could say to my mother—

> 'O mother, mother, mak my bed soon,
> For I'm sick at the heart, and fain would lie doun.'

I was now tempted to commit what I ought to have

known to be a folly. I determined, after receiving some information at a hut, to forsake the road, and take a *short cut* to my destination. How terribly long these short cuts always are! Before I reached the end of mine, I was ready to sink from fatigue; and indeed, if it had not happened that the last few miles led over familiar ground, I must unquestionably have made the heath my bed, 'with the bracken curtain for my head,' for darkly and sternly the night came down upon my solitary path. But I now knew every inch of the ground; and I could have named every height and hollow of the hills as their outline was dimly visible against the dull sky behind. So I stumbled on painfully, but surely; and at length recognised those well-known chimneys which, to a stranger, would have appeared but a filmy spot upon the night.

I was at length at the door. I knocked—louder—louder: no answer. After listening for a few moments, I was beset by a mystic terror: was my mother dead? But presently I recollected that I was not expected home that night, and that it was now past the hour of her going to bed; and as I knew that my wild fancies were the effect of fever, my fear assumed a new direction. If I could but get in without awaking her! A night's rest, I was sure, would recover me; and in the morning my mother would really have the joyful surprise I had pictured, and not be horrified, as she would be to-night, by the sight of her only son, weak, ghastly, and hardly able to speak. I coasted round to the lattice of my own apartment, holding by the wall for support. It was unbolted. I was able to open it; and joy giving me a momentary strength, I crept into the room, and groping my way, went to bed.

As I felt myself sink upon the soft pillow—in my own

house, and with my mother in the next room—a sweet feeling of satisfaction stole over my senses, which seemed to still the throbbing of my temples; and my imagination, with one parting whirl—which comprehended the young woman, and the two-pair, and confounded them with present persons and localities—was just about to yield to the influence of sleep, when a circumstance occurred that made me doubt whether I was still awake. Whether I saw the door open, or felt it, I cannot tell; but I knew that it opened, and that the appearance of a human being entered, slowly and noiselessly, and approached the bed. It was now standing between me and the window; and I could see by the outline, and some details of the figure, that it was that of a man or boy, in a long dress, reaching to the feet. It looked at me intently; it bent over my face, as if to observe my features, and then, without uttering a word, it disappeared by the window.

This strange apparition, whether real or unreal, spoiled all. What I wanted was rest—rest of body and mind; and now my imagination, instead of yielding to sleep, aroused itself with a morbid energy which made me tremble for my senses. I thought the figure I had seen was *myself*. Owing either to the imprisoned moon having obtained more power, or simply to my eyes having become accustomed to the gloom of the apartment, I had been able to detect—or now supposed I had done so—a resemblance in age, and figure, and even in the dim features that had bent above mine. This, I thought, was my 'Double'—for I had read of such things—and that it had gone forth to visit the premises, and greet the old familiar places. Nay, as a faint sound now and then met my ear, I fancied that I was conscious of what it saw and felt; and when a low whine proved that it

had reached the dog-kennel, I patted my old favourite as he licked my hand, and praised the instinct by which, after so great a lapse of time, he had known my footstep in the dark.

There mingled, however, with this fancy a not less strange suspicion that it was untrue; for in fact my burning skin and throbbing temples gave a terrible reality to my condition. But presently the veil that concealed the world of shadows appeared to be entirely rent away, and the 'Double' was a mere commonplace fact in comparison with the extravagances that followed. As for myself, I rocked like a pendulum between two distant parts of the country. One moment the noise of the wheels and voices of London was in my ears, and her phantom population floated past me; the next I knew myself to be on the spot where I really lay, but surrounded both with the living and the dead, all mocking and grinning, and laughing and sobbing, in the wildest confusion. My breath came thick; I felt as if the spectral crowd would suffocate me; I commanded them, in rage and terror, to begone; and at length, in a feeble broken voice, I called for help. At that moment my delirium was at its height.

'I come!' cried a voice from without; and at the word a hushing sound ran round the room, and as a small faint light appeared at the door, the phantoms that had haunted me disappeared like morning mists before the sun. It was of course the young woman of the hackney-coach. Shading with her hand the tiny taper she carried, she looked towards the bed where I lay shrouded in darkness, and I saw that a faint cold smile illumined her face, 'like moonlight on a marble statue.' Her complexion was startlingly pale, and yet her hair as black as night, and the contrast conferred

upon features that were chiselled in the most exquisite Grecian mould a fitting character of preternatural beauty. She advanced a step, and then, seeming to hesitate, set down the taper on a table in the corner of the room behind the door, and glided slowly towards the bed, her footfall giving no more sound than a moonbeam.

As she came nearer and nearer, my eyes closed involuntarily; and when she sat down by the bedside, I felt a faintness steal over me, that was like the parting of soul and body. But the next moment she took my hand in hers, and the touch of her cool fingers sent a thrill to my bosom which recalled me from death.

'You have been far away!' said she in a low voice, while the words seemed to drop in liquid melody upon my heart. 'But you have now come back: you are in your own bed, in your own house, and with none near you but those to whom you are dear—oh, how dear! Will you promise never to go away again?'

My soul promised; but my lips, although they moved, were mute. The fountain of sound seemed dried up within me; my mouth was parched by the fever that burned in my veins; and I could not have uttered a word if a dagger had been pointed at my throat.

'You know how your mother loves you,' continued she: 'you know how *I* love you; you know how Ponto loves you —poor dog, I heard him whine a little while ago! He was dreaming that he licked his master's hand. *Will* you promise never to go away again?'

I made a mighty effort to speak; but I only shook the bed with the convulsion.

'Alas!' said she, 'you will not answer. You do not even comprehend me—unhappy girl that I am!' And I felt

some warm soft drops fall upon my hand, which she still held within hers.

It would be vain to attempt to describe my sensations. I was cunning, however, in the midst of my happiness, for I was not mad enough to refrain from at least doubting its reality; and when by-and-by I *could* have spoken, I would not hazard a word, lest the sound of my own voice should dissipate the blessed illusion. For the same reason I did not dare to press her hand, even when my fingers became strong enough to do so; for I would not feel that it was unsubstantial. All I desired was to lie there and thus for ever and ever.

But at length the exorcised spectres returned one by one. First came the mother, slowly and noiselessly, and gliding up to the bed, she subsided like a cloud into a chair on the side opposite her daughter, and stared at me. Then came the father in the same fashion, and he planted himself upright at the foot, and stared at me too; and they both stared at me, as I could feel (for there was not light enough to see), with dull and marble eyes. I was troubled by the gaze. It disturbed the sacredness of my communion with *her*, and it likewise gave me, fevered as I was, an increasing suspicion of the unreality of the whole scene. What could bring this tribe of London people to our Scottish home? Would it not be more natural for my mother, who was only in the next room——

And my mother answered to the summons. The idea had hardly been formed in my spirit-compelling brain, when the door again opened, and she glided into the room.

'What are you gathered about the bed for?' said she in a low voice.

'Hush! hush! hush!' replied the watchers: 'he is come back!'

'I know it.'

'He is asleep.'

'I know it; but how do you?'

'See! see! see!' said the phantoms.

'See! There is nothing there: surely alarm has turned your brains!'

'He is in this bed, but we must not disturb him with the light.'

'God be with us!' cried my mother; 'what a tale is this?' And at the holy name they all started up, and I expected to hear the 'whir' of their departure.

'It is not ten minutes,' continued she, 'since I heard Ponto whine, as if caressing some one; and throwing open the lattice, I looked out, and with mingled joy and terror saw the wanderer returned. Poor lad! he would come in; and seeing that my opposition only fretted him, I yielded, put him to bed, and leaving him fast asleep, came here to tell you.' At this recital I felt one of the sudden changes of delirium, and could hardly hold from laughing at the idea of my mother being deceived by my 'Double.' But the effect upon my strange visitors was very different.

'Merciful Providence!' cried the elder lady; 'I fear there is a trial preparing for you. Since it is true that such appearances do come, they can never come in vain. Unhappy woman, it is a wraith you have seen!'

'Silence, wife!' interposed the old gentleman. 'Our kind friend has an excuse for her delusion in the natural feelings —she saw with her eyes only what her heart looked for: but your idea is sheer nonsense.'

'You all appear to me to want an excuse,' said my mother. 'Tell me, my sweet Isabel—you who never forget anything but self, and never misapprehend anything but your own

goodness of nature—tell me what is the meaning of this extraordinary scene?'

'I can only say,' said Isabel, in a voice that seemed still more rich and soft when heard after other voices—'I can only say that he returned not long ago; that I watched him into his room; that I followed instantly, and sat down by his bedside; and that he is now lying asleep before us, with his hand in mine, and his thick irregular breathing, the effects of his harassing journey, only too audible.'

'Then God help us all, and save our wits! for there is nothing more certain in this world than that I have just left him asleep as you describe, and that I had some difficulty in extricating my hand from his to come away without awaking him.'

'Stop, madam!' cried the old gentleman, as my mother was about to run to the corner of the room for the taper—'Did you expect your son to-night?'

'No, not till to-morrow. It is physically impossible that he can arrive before the middle of the day to-morrow.'

'Then the mystery is explained: it was your own son you put to bed—not mine!'

Here was an explanation indeed; but one that was far beyond the reach of my poor fevered brain. It appeared that it was not I who was lying in the bed before them, but somebody else! If I was not myself, who was I? I would thank them to tell me that, or else leave me alone with Isabel. It was dreadful to be nobody at all. I would go back to London. I was in London. It was at me the brick boxes stared with their dead eyes, and no longer at one another. They turned as I turned; they followed as I flew; they surrounded me everywhere; everywhere I could see the mass extending back to an immeasurable distance:

and all staring, staring, staring at me. Their myriad cries were in my ears; but the intonation was lost in the roar of carriage-wheels, and it was some time before I could understand what they said: till at length their united voice, compelling, as it were, all other sounds to join it, the whole staring world cried out: 'Who are you?—who are you?—who are you?' Suddenly a shrill scream penetrated through the mass of sound, which at once died away in the 'hush' I had before heard running round the apartment; and in a moment my senses rallied, and by the light of the taper, which some one now held above my face, I saw my mother bending over me. 'My son, my son!' she cried; 'what a heart have I that did not tell me it was you!'

'Mother, what is this? Tell me where I am? Am I not in our own house?'

'You are—but not in *the* house. Do you not remember the building lease? This is the new dwelling that was built while you were away, close to ours, and uniform with it. But you are ill, feverish, faint. Not a word more to-night; but try to sleep. I see it all without explanation: you came in by the window, as you often used to do; and our tenant's son, a most amiable lad, but alas! of weak intellect, who had strayed away from his distracted friends'——

'Who are they?' said I pointing, and feeling myself again begin to wander.

'They are his father and mother. Do you not remember their delivering a packet to you in London?'

'But there was another here: where is she? I heard her name: it was Isabel. I cannot see her—I must see her.'

'And so indeed you will, every day. She is even now preparing your medicine. She will be a sister to you, my

own Ronald—a sister worthy of the name—as she is to her poor unhappy brother. And you must love her—you must be sure to love her. Will you promise?'

This time my effort to reply to the question succeeded; and murmuring 'I will!' I sank into insensibility.

It has often occurred to me, that if the above circumstances had not been explained, they would have formed good grounds for the conversion of the whole party to a superstition that has now passed away. But in reality there was nothing strange even in the coincidence of the poor young man entering the room about the same time with myself, for it was at the usual hour of his going to bed. He had frequently wandered away from his friends; but this time his absence had been so long, as to throw them all into alarm, and almost despair. Their journey to London was entirely on his account; but after many consultations, they gave up hopes of his recovery, and brought him back to Scotland. There he lived a harmless and perhaps happy life for three years after the strange interview I have described; and then, to the surprise and horror of his friends, his dead body was one day found in the river.

And what became of Isabel? Did I redeem my promise to love her? Were we married? Alas! alas! these questions could be easily disposed of in romance; but in a narrative of real life, they are of a kind which can rarely be answered without pain. I will not answer them at all. Suffice it, that the 'serious business' I intended to commence in Scotland turned out, after two or three years' trial, a joke; and that I returned, in pursuance of my destiny, to the brick boxes of London.

THE STORY OF ELISABETTA SIRANI.

'ELISABETTA mia, I have lost pencils—colours; come, child, and aid me to look for them. What! thou art idling away all the day in that corner, instead of taking care of thy little sisters. Hark! there is Barbara crying; and *la bambina* Anna too; and the pencils are lost; and Il Signor Montenegro is waiting for the picture. I shall never finish it.'

The speaker—Giovanni Andrea Sirani, one of the second-rate artists of Bologna—hurriedly tossed about brushes, palette, and oils, making the studio all confusion, and loudly calling on Elisabetta for assistance. She came forward from the sunny nook in the window where she had been hidden, and addressing her angry father in a voice remarkable for its soothing and sweet tones, put into his hands the pencils he required, arranged his palette, and stood behind him while he again continued his work.

Elisabetta was a girl of about twelve years, tall and well formed, though still childlike in proportions, and too angular

to be graceful. But her face was so striking, that it would not be passed unnoticed even by a stranger. It was not that its beauty attracted the eye, for the features were not regular; and the long and rather aquiline nose would have given a character too masculine to the countenance of the girl, had it not been for the exquisitely sweet expression of the mouth, and the dimpled chin. Again, too, the harshness given by the strongly marked eyebrows was softened by the dreamy languor of the dark eyes and drooping eyelids. In short, the whole face of Elisabetta Sirani shewed a combination of masculine powers and womanly sweetness, united with that flexibility of features and ever-changing expression which almost always denotes great sensitiveness of mind.

Signor Andrea, relieved from his disquietudes, worked at his picture, now and then calling on his young daughter to inspect his progress, and listening to her remarks and comments, which, though given with the simplicity and timidity of a child, shewed an understanding which justified the consideration with which she was treated by her father. Sometimes the hasty and nervous temperament of the artist was excited to anger by the noise of the children within, and he would hurriedly dismiss his eldest daughter to restore quiet, and as quickly call for her again, declaring he could not paint unless she was beside him, to grind his colours and prepare his pencils; he did not add, to give him various unsuspected, but most successful, hints even in the picture itself.

After an hour or two spent in this manner, the *tête-à-tête* of the artist and his daughter was broken by the entrance of a man in a clerical dress, but attired with all the taste and sumptuousness which was prevalent in the leading cities

of Italy, and especially Bologna, at the close of the seventeenth century. Andrea Sirani received his visitor with mingled cordiality and respect.

'I am glad the Signor Conte Malvasia is come: I should not have been satisfied to send my picture away without his opinion on its merits.'

'You are very obliging, Signor Sirani,' said the ecclesiastic; 'but I have usually only one opinion regarding your beautiful pictures, and this is equal to any.' He sat down on the painting-chair which Elisabetta had placed for him opposite the picture; and after patting her cheek with a friendly and affectionate expression, which dyed it with a blush of pleasure, he turned his whole attention to the work before him.

'I see you love the soft and melting shadows and lucid lights of our Guido, the pride of Bologna,' said Conte Malvasia. 'And you do not work in the gloom, which some of our stern foreign brethren delight in; you let the sun visit your painting-room, save for this warm crimson curtain, which must cast such a pleasant glow on everything here, but rather darkens the picture now.' He drew back the heavy folds, and discovered the little nook where Elisabetta had sat. It was strewed with pencils and sketches of all kinds; Malvasia picked up one of the scattered papers.

'Is this beautiful Madonna one of your studies, friend Andrea? Why, your first sketches are absolutely as good as your freshest paintings.'

The artist looked at it, and turned away with a discontented air. 'Oh, mónsignor, it is only one of the child's drawings.—Elisabetta, I think you might be better employed than this. Go to your mother, child.'

'Stay one moment, Elisabetta,' said Conte Malvasia, drawing towards him the reluctant, blushing, and almost tearful child. 'Did you really draw and design this?'

'Yes, monsignor,' said Elisabetta.

'Signor Andrea,' continued the conte, 'why do you not teach your daughter to be a painter like yourself?—Would you not like to be a great artist, *figlia mia?*' added he.

Elisabetta did not speak, but her eyes lighted up, and her lips quivered with emotion. Andrea said roughly: 'No woman could ever be a painter.'

'How can you say so, Andrea? Have you forgotten Lavinia Fontana, and Antonia Pinelli, and our own Properzia?'

'Do not bring Madame de Rossi forward as a model for my child. Besides, Elisabetta does not wish to be a painter.'

Elisabetta went timidly up to her father, and laid her hands, still folded in entreaty, on his arm. 'Dear father, I do wish it; I long for it. Listen to it, Signor Conte: teach me to paint like you.'

The painter, jealous as he seemed of his art, was moved, and from that time he suffered his daughter to pursue her studies openly, though the aid and instruction which she received from him were very little. Andrea Sirani seemed displeased that a young girl should know almost intuitively what it had taken him long years to acquire. He did not see the difference between natural genius and talents which were almost entirely the result of cultivation. Yet Elisabetta did not trust to her genius alone, a light which has led astray many a young aspirant; nor did she think that her surprising powers rendered supererogatory the patient study which is necessary in every intellectual pursuit—most of all

in art, where the tact and judgment of a philosopher, the learning of a man well versed in literature, the eye and heart of a poet, and the magic hand of a painter, are all required by him who would attain to eminence.

Elisabetta Sirani—and we are not describing an ideal character, but one who really lived, and breathed, and worked, whose name is still honoured among the Bolognese school—Elisabetta Sirani, as her childhood passed away, devoted herself more and more to her beloved art. She perceived that her father felt an ill-concealed aversion to seeing her at her easel, and, besides, he had been so accustomed to her assistance in the minor duties of the studio, that he could not bear to see her painting on her own account, instead of attending upon him. Therefore she rose by the dawn of day, and painted and studied with unwearied perseverance, until the hour when Andrea required her presence in the studio. Then she patiently relinquished the occupation which she loved so well, and turned her attention to her father, to the domestic concerns of the house, or to the acquirement of music, a study which was her greatest delight next to the one in which her genius lay. To the world she was still the simple Elisabetta, daughter of the painter Sirani, distinguished by no outward signs from her young sisters Barbara and Anna, or from her companions among the Bolognese maidens. No one knew in what her hidden talents were, save her father—who shut his eyes upon them as much as possible—and her unfailing friend, the Conte Malvasia.

At last, when Elisabetta had reached her sixteenth year, there came a change. A slow and painful disease stole over the unfortunate Andrea Sirani, crippling all his joints, so that day by day the exercise of his art grew more difficult,

until at length it became almost impossible for him to wield the pencil. In vain did Elisabetta chafe the poor numbed hands with her soft fingers: they would work no more; and life itself seemed torn from the despairing artist, thus deprived of the power to embody his conceptions.

'It is all in vain, Elisabetta,' cried Sirani one day when the brush had fallen from his crippled fingers, which could no longer guide it—'it is all in vain; I shall never paint more.'

He looked at his powerless and disfigured hands, and tears rolled down the cheeks of the strong man. No wonder that the gentle Elisabetta wept too, and threw her arms around her father's neck, in vain attempts at consolation.

'Do not give me hope, my child,' he answered mournfully; 'I know it is incurable. I am no more an artist. Holy mother of mercy! how shall I find bread for my children?'

Elisabetta's cheek flushed, her eyes sparkled, words rose to her lips; but she stopped, thinking of the pain they would give to her helpless father. At last she said timidly: 'Father, you know I have been your pupil these four years; in that time, I think—I hope—I have learned enough to gain something by my paintings. Will you let me try?'

Andrea shook his head. 'Impossible: a girl not seventeen, and I have been a painter these twenty years. But it is long since I have seen thy work, child,' he added in some confusion: 'bring it hither.'

Elisabetta, deeply joyful that her woman's tact had thus effected what she thought would be a discovery both difficult and painful, quickly placed before her father a Madonna, so beautiful, so full of genius, that the artist at once saw the concealed powers of his child. It was in vain to nourish

jealousy; for, alas! there could be no rivalry between them now. He kissed Elisabetta's brow, and prayed the Virgin, whose sweet face she had depicted so well, to bless his good and talented child.

Elisabetta became a painter. When only seventeen, her first exhibited picture made her the wonder and pride of her native city. It was a religious subject, such as the gentle and pious girl loved delineating—the saints of her church, St Ignatius and St Francis Xavier. The purchaser was the Marchese Spada; and the sum Elisabetta thus gained was large enough to bring a thrill of proud delight to her heart, with the consciousness that the future was her own. Her little sisters laughed and shouted at the sight of the purse of gold; her young companion, Ginevra Cantofoli, whispered in her ear how many personal adornments of silks and jewels it would purchase; but Elisabetta went straight to her father's chamber, and laid the first fruits of her talents and industry on the bed where the suffering artist was now confined.

'My father,' she said in meek and blushing humility, '*we* have gained thus much by my picture. See!'

'Thou sayest *we*, Elisabetta!' answered Sirani. 'Why not I? This money is all thine.'

'Not so, dear father,' said the young girl: 'all I have learned in painting I owe to thee. I am only thy *hand* to work in thy stead, until it shall please the blessed Madonna to restore thee. Therefore this shall be devoted, like all thy other earnings, good and kind father, to the general benefit of the family.'

Two large tears stole through the closed eyes of the poor artist; but he said nothing. Perhaps Elisabetta's loving deceit, aided by the natural vanity of mankind, made him

actually believe that his daughter's unselfish gifts were but a due requital for his instruction in art. But he made no opposition, and her future earnings were all appropriated to the domestic wants of the family. Night and day did the young Bolognese toil at her easel. Yet it was a labour of love; for she had that earnest devotion and enthusiasm for art which constitutes the true riches of genius, and its reward, entirely independent of worldly success. But this latter did not fail Elisabetta. A woman, young and fair even among the beautiful of Italy, she attracted the attention of the connoisseurs of her native city, who saw with surprise a young maiden of eighteen execute with facility works equal to many of the most renowned artists of the day. Her quickness of hand was extraordinary; her slight fingers seemed merely to play with the pencil, and the painting grew under them almost by magic. The number of pictures which yearly came from her easel was astonishing even now; but Elisabetta had that strongest spur of all to diligence—she was working for the daily bread of those most dear to her, and who could only trust to her for support.

Looking back through the lapse of centuries on the life of this young and gifted creature, one marvels first at the wonderful steadiness of purpose which supported her at the commencement of her arduous career; and then at the sweet womanly nature which made her still humble, unsophisticated, and undazzled by the success with which that career was crowned. The noble and talented of the land crowded to her studio; churches far and wide were adorned with her pictures; kings and queens sent her letters of compliment on her works; and yet the young artist, in her own quiet home, was ever the same simple Elisabetta

—tending her decrepit father, who was sometimes for whole months confined to his bed, aiding her mother in all domestic cares and occupations, instructing her sisters, and brightening the whole house with her cheerful and blithe spirit.

According to the usual custom of the Italian painters, Andrea Sirani had formed a school of young artists, who profited by his instructions, and followed his style. Among these was the favourite companion of Elisabetta, Ginevra Cantofoli. From earliest girlhood there had been a friendly rivalry between the two—at first amicable; and then, as Elisabetta's success increased, becoming gradually more serious, though it was not apparent. Every new triumph of the daughter of Sirani gave a pang to the heart of Ginevra, until at last the wild passions of the south were all roused in her bosom, and a jealous rivalry took the place of her old love for her childish friend. Every sweet and kindly word of Elisabetta's but imbittered this feeling, which became the stronger for concealment. When, in the sincerity of her friendship, Elisabetta praised and encouraged her young rival, and at times assisted Ginevra in her pictures by the touches of her own superior hand, no feeling save of envy and dislike entered the heart of the proud and desperate Italian. Even her beauty—and Ginevra was very beautiful —she counted as nothing compared with that of Elisabetta.

But all unconscious of this, the artist's daughter went on her way—her loving and quiet spirit untroubled by any of those violent passions which distracted Ginevra—pursuing her art with unwearied diligence. She rarely joined in the amusements of the ladies of Bologna; her sole recreation was her favourite science of music. Often in the delicious Italian evenings Elisabetta would take her harp,

the instrument in which she excelled, and for hours together draw from it the sweetest sounds, giving up her whole soul to the passion for music and to love of art—talents not unfrequently combined.

One night she was thus occupied, when Conte Malvasia entered unobserved. He went up to the couch where Andrea Sirani, whose sufferings were a little abated, lay watching the sunset, and occasionally turning his eyes to where Elisabetta sat, bending over her harp. Her form had lost its angularity in the roundness of womanhood; her dark hair was knotted behind in thick plaits, after the fashion of the times, save that a few silken curls rested on her white throat, which the stiff and tight-fitting dress of the day could scarcely hide. The expression of her eyes and mouth was as sweet as ever, and as she sang, her whole face was lighted up with the irresistible beauty of genius.

'Look at her!' whispered the proud father to Malvasia: 'tell me, is not my Elisabetta the fairest maiden, as well as the greatest painter, in all Bologna?'

The good old ecclesiastic smiled, and assented. 'She looks as happy as if she had a foreshadowing of the good news I bring,' he answered.

'About the holy fathers of Certosa?' eagerly asked Sirani. 'What! have they determined—and for Elisabetta?'

'Yes,' laconically said the conte.

'Elisabetta—Elisabettina mia,' cried the delighted Andrea, who had long since forgotten his jealousy in fatherly love and pride, 'you are successful; the good padri of Certosa have chosen you to paint the altarpiece!'

Elisabetta darted forward with unconstrained delight, and clapped her hands, a token of pleasure which was natural to the almost childlike simplicity of her character, which no

honours could change. She kissed the hands of Malvasia, and thanked him over and over again.

'But, my dear child,' said the benevolent conte, 'you are only at the commencement of the journey, and you seem as joyful as if the goal were attained. Do you know what is the chosen subject of the picture? A grand and difficult one —the Baptism of our Lord. Have you any idea of the manner in which you will treat it, Elisabetta?'

'I will shew you, Signor Conte.' She took a sheet of paper, laid it on her knee, and with a brush dipped in Indian ink, began to dash in the first sketch of her composition with wonderful rapidity and power.

'Will this please you, monsignor?' timidly said Elisabetta at last, holding up the design of the picture which was afterwards the pride of the monastery of Certosa, and the work on which the fame of Elisabetta Sirani chiefly rests.

Ere the father and Conte Malvasia could find words for their delight, Ginevra Cantofoli entered. There was a heavy sadness over her face, and a wild look in her eyes, which spoke of some inward trouble. Elisabetta, in her unconscious delight, threw her arms round her friend's neck, and told her of her happiness; but Ginevra recoiled as from the touch of a serpent.

'Then it is you who have taken from me my heart's desire?' she said bitterly. 'I sought this favour; but the padri, like all the world, thought me your inferior. I suppose I shall live and die so, Elisabetta?' she added, recollecting herself, and attempting a forced smile.

'Why did you not tell me of this, Ginevra?' said Elisabetta gently.

'Because I resolved for once to think and act for

myself: I have failed; now let us forget it,' answered the other.

But Ginevra did not forget it; and year after year that added to Elisabetta's fame, only buried the poison deeper in the heart of her rival.

At last, added to all other jealousies, came the one excited by love. From the city of Parma, where he had been completing his studies in art, came Battista Zani, once the pupil of Sirani, and now the betrothed of Ginevra Cantofoli. Young, enthusiastic, overflowing with genius, and all that could win a maiden's love, no wonder was it that Battista was almost idolised by the girl he had chosen to be his wife one day. And when, like all who came within the circle of her presence, he yielded to the magic influence of Elisabetta Sirani, and felt and expressed towards her a regard and reverence almost approaching to the saint-worship of his church, Ginevra's very heart was rent asunder with jealousy. Sometimes, in his simplicity and utter unconsciousness of evil, Battista talked to his betrothed of Elisabetta, of her saint-like beauty—upon which he delighted to look, with that worship of all things pure and lovely which was so deep in his artist soul—of her unworldliness, her genius; and all this was to Ginevra the most exquisite torture. Then, too, in the frank admiration and friendly interest which Elisabetta shewed towards the young painter, whose talents gave promise of such wondrous fruits, Ginevra saw nothing but the preference of love, for she could not imagine the possibility of any maiden's beholding her own Battista without loving him. And truly with many she would not have been far wrong; but it was not so with Elisabetta Sirani.

After a time spent in his native Bologna, the artist determined to go to Rome.

'Would that I too were going to Rome—beautiful Rome!' said Elisabetta when Battista came to bid her adieu. 'How pleasant to see all its wonders—to behold the glorious Capella Sistina, of which we have so often dreamed, Battista! I would that I were going also!'

'Then why not, Madonna Elisabetta?' cried the young painter eagerly. 'It would be so happy to see Rome with thee!'

Elisabetta smiled quietly. 'Thou forgettest my father, my home. How could I leave all these, good Battista, even to go to Rome?'

'Then I will think of thee always, Madonna. In my memory, in my prayers, thou shalt visit Rome.'

'Be it so, kind Battista,' smilingly answered Elisabetta, as she gave him her hand, which he kissed with reverence, and departed with Ginevra.

'Is she not an angel, this Madonna Sirani, to speak so kindly to a poor artist like me?' he said to his betrothed. 'But ere I see her again, I may be more worthy of her goodness. Dost thou not think so, Ginevra mia?'

'Yes,' answered Ginevra in a low and changed voice, while a horrible determination made her hands clench and her eyes flash fire. But Battista saw it not; he was wholly absorbed in those delicious dreams of coming glory which too often fade like a morning cloud.

'La Signora Elisabetta desires her spiced draught,' said the old nurse, coming from the painting-room one day. 'Get it ready for her quickly, Benedetta.'

Benedetta, a young country-girl whom Elisabetta had educated, and who loved her mistress with passionate tenderness, went speedily about her task.

'Thou art putting too much cinnamon, silly child,' said the old woman.

'It is not cinnamon, good mother; it is another spice that I bought the other day. The woman who sold it said it would do Madonna good, and that I must give it to her every day. And truly she was right, for I never saw the signora's eyes look so bright as yesterday.'

So the young girl carried the cup to her mistress, and watched her with affectionate looks while she drank her favourite beverage of sugar, cinnamon, and water. How little did either know that this day it was a draught of deadly poison!

An unaccountable illness seized upon the doomed Elisabetta. It was little dreaded by those who best loved her; but she herself felt an utter languor—a strange overpowering sensation, which gave her a foreshadowing of the coming death. When Ginevra, whom her summons had brought, stood beside her, Elisabetta spoke to her early friend with an affectionate seriousness, beyond her wont, of the beloved art they both followed—of Ginevra's future life—of her lover.

A look at once full of hatred and despairing grief came over Ginevra's face; but Elisabetta went on: 'I always loved thee, Ginevra, and thy Battista too; and if I recover'——

'Thou wilt die; thou art dying now,' said Ginevra in a low and hissing whisper. 'Thou hast been my bane through life, my rival in all things; last of all, in Battista's love. I have poisoned thee!'

A shudder convulsed Elisabetta's frame, but she did not shriek: awe, not terror, possessed her, as she heard of her certain doom. Her lips moved long in a wordless prayer;

then she looked calmly at Ginevra, who stood beside her like a statue of stone, and said: 'Thou art deceived; I never loved any man; my life was devoted to God and to divine art. Thy Battista wooed me not, Ginevra: he never loved but thee.'

In utter abandonment of remorse the murderess sued for pardon at her victim's feet. 'Denounce me: thy death will be slow: let me die before thee, as an atonement.'

'Not so,' faintly answered Elisabetta; 'the secret be between thee and me. Let not my father know that his child died by poison. The holy saints forgive thee, as I do. Ginevra, live and be happy with thy betrothed.'

'It is too late,' shrieked Ginevra; 'Battista is dead!'

It was indeed so. Battista Zani died at Rome, soon after his arrival, leaving behind him only the memory of the genius which had promised so much, and which perished in its early blossoming. His name, chronicled by Malvasia, is all that remains to posterity of Battista Zani.

Elisabetta Sirani died by this mysterious and horrible death in her twenty-sixth year. Many surmises arose as to the fatal cause, some approaching near the fact, others wild and contradictory. Amidst the pomp of splendid obsequies, the maiden artist was laid in the tomb of Guido Reni. The orator Picinardi poured forth a torrent of eloquent lamentation over the beloved dead; solemn music sounded through the church of St Domenico; and the whole city mourned over the pride of Bologna.

But while poets wrote her elegy, and sculptors adorned her costly monument, the memory of Elisabetta remained, like that of a departed saint, in her father's house; at first sorrowful, afterwards bringing only holy and solemn thoughts. They spoke of her genius; of her humility, which scorned

not all the lowly but sweet offices of home; of her beauty, made still lovelier by the calm dignity with which, knowing she was fair, she gloried not in it; and of her pure and holy mind, which, though not too proud for earth, ever turned heavenward, as if there was its true home. And thus, like the continual perfume of virtue and of holiness, which death cannot take away, lingered on earth the memory of Elisabetta Sirani.

Andrea Sirani survived his eldest daughter many years. His two other children, Barbara and Anna, also became artists; and there is still extant a graceful sonnet of Picinardi, addressed to Barbara Sirani, who had painted from memory the portrait of the lost Elisabetta.

Of Ginevra Cantofoli, all that need be said is, that she lived and she died.

THE JAGUAR-HUNTER.

THE pioneer settlers in the southern states of America are often exposed to danger from the attacks of wild animals. This is more particularly the case in approaching the tropical regions. The squatters of Texas relate many fearful tales of conflicts with panthers and wolves. In the states of the Mexican union, however, the ferocious jaguar, or South American tiger, is met with, which commits fearful ravages among the numerous herds of cattle and horses, from the breeding and sale of which many large proprietors derive a princely income. I was once staying for a few weeks at one of these estates, where a jaguar had for some time kept the whole establishment in alarm, and escaped all attempts made for its destruction. At last, on the return of a hunter who had been absent on a distant expedition, all apprehension as to further annoyance ceased; for such were the courage and skill of the new-comer in attacking these animals, as to have gained for him the name of Bermudes *el Matasiete*, or 'Killer-of-Seven.' On the night following his

arrival, he invited me to join him in watching for the intruder, and appointed the rendezvous at the *Ojo de Agua*, a fountain at the foot of a slope stretching gradually away till it met the forest.

Soon after sunset I strolled towards the place agreed on. A tall cedar stood near the fountain, its lower branches dipping into the water as it bubbled away to the bottom of the valley. Behind the cedar rose the knotty trunks of a group of mahogany-trees, interspersed with flowery sumachs. On the opposite side, a little glade was formed by a cluster of ash-trees, at the entrance of which I found the hunter lying at his ease upon the grass, enjoying the coolness after the extreme heat of the day, with his blue-barrelled rifle at his side. I congratulated him on the choice of so picturesque a site for the rendezvous. 'I am delighted,' he replied with a smile, the whole meaning of which I did not at first comprehend, 'that the place is to your taste, but you will see before long that it is better chosen than you think.'

We had not long been seated when a second hunter appeared, a tall Canadian, his rifle in one hand, and leading a lame colt by the other. After exchanging a few words with Bermudes, he tied the limping animal to the stem of the cedar by a long and strong cord, and then came to sit down by our side on the moss. I was at a loss to understand the object of these preparations, and of the fires which had been kindled in various directions. On questioning the Mexican, he rose, and conducting me to the edge of the fountain, shewed me several formidable footprints in the damp soil. 'Those marks,' he continued, 'were made yesterday—of that I am certain. The jaguar, therefore, has not drunk for twenty-four hours, and for twenty leagues round there is not a drop of water but what is here on the estate. The

fires yonder will scare the animal in that quarter; while thirst and the scent of the colt will certainly bring him here in the course of this night.'

The logic of this reasoning appeared to me irresistible; and I found myself, quite unarmed, suddenly transformed into a tiger-hunter. At first I thought my best course would be to make a quiet retreat; a mixture of curiosity and self-esteem, however, induced me to stay. The Canadian was stretched at full length on the bank, snoring loudly. Bermudes beckoned me to sit down by his side; and to pass away the time, gave me an account of his numerous adventures. As we had yet four hours to wait before the animal could be expected to make his appearance, I sat patiently listening, while the hunter went on with his tale. For an hour no other sound save that of his voice and the loud breathing of the sleeper disturbed the silence. All at once the colt started and reared in alarm, and the dry bushes crackled with so dismal a sound, that I could not repress a shudder. 'Did you not hear a howl?' I inquired of Bermudes, who shook his head and laughed as he answered: 'When you have once, only once, heard a tiger's roar, you will never again be likely to mistake for it the humming of mosquitoes. In a few hours you will be as well instructed on this point as I am.'

It was a false alarm: all became quiet as before, while the hunter continued the history of his exploits. But a second interruption followed; the colt began to utter a cry between a shriek and a moan. 'Is it mosquitoes this time,' I asked, 'that so terrify the poor animal?'

'Probably not,' rejoined Bermudes. 'Listen!'

'Hold—look yonder!' I said, pointing to a young poplar that rose above the surrounding trees: 'it is not the

wind which shakes that tree while all the others are motionless.'

'It is the jaguar,' said the hunter after a pause. 'At present he is playing the brave, but his hour is not yet come; and for the moment he is more afraid than you are. Do not think, however,' he pursued, 'that tiger-shooting has no dangers. You will be able to judge how much another hour without drinking will have exasperated the animal. I have seen many a brave man turn pale at their frightful roar.'

Having expressed my uneasiness at being unarmed, my companion promised to furnish me with a weapon when the fitting moment should arrive, and resumed his recital where he had left off. But as the night grew darker, the interruptions became more frequent, and by-and-by a distant growl was heard, followed by a plaintive and menacing howl. 'I was mistaken,' said the hunter, coming to a pause; 'instead of one tiger, there are two. Males never attack in company; and should it be male and female, we shall have a double warning, for Providence, which has given a rattle to the most dangerous of serpents to announce its approach, has also given to wild animals eyes that glisten in the night, and roaring voices to proclaim their attack.'

This assertion was far from agreeable; but the danger was still distant; the moment had not yet come when thirst makes these animals forget the involuntary dread which they have of the presence of man. All was again quiet in the woods, whose gloomy depths were thrown into shadow by the moonlight. The Canadian had risen from the grass, and leaned drowsily against the tree, smoking a short pipe, with his rifle between his knees. I had learned enough of the course of the stars to know that the hour was at hand

for which we had so long been watching. Bermudes again spoke: 'It is time now to think of you,' he said. 'Do you not perceive that the silence becomes more and more profound around us, and that the odour of the plants has almost changed? Under the influence of the night they exhale a new perfume. When you have lived longer in the desert, you will learn that each hour of the day, as well as of the night, has its peculiar signification. At each hour, as one voice becomes silent, another makes itself heard. At present, ferocious beasts salute the darkness, as to-morrow the birds will salute the dawn. We are near the hour when man loses the imposing influence of his look—at night, his eye becomes dim, while that of wild animals brightens and pierces the deepest gloom: man is the king of day, but the jaguar is king of darkness.'

After uttering these words with a grave emphasis, the hunter rose, and fetching a bundle from the place where it had been deposited, unrolled two sheep-skins covered with their wool, and, drawing his knife from its sheath, observed: 'You see your arms!'

'And what, in the name of wonder, do you expect me to do with that?' I inquired. 'I hoped at least for a rifle.'

Bermudes proceeded to explain that, on such an occasion, a rifle could be intrusted to those only who were sure of their aim. 'You will roll these skins round your left arm,' he continued, 'and take the knife in your right hand; then you put your right knee to the ground, and rest your protected arm upon the left knee. In this manner the arm defends your head and body, while your stomach will be shielded by the knee; for tigers have an ugly habit of trying to disembowel their enemy with a stroke of their paw. If you are attacked, you present your arm, and while

the animal's tusks are buried in the wool, you rip him up from flank to shoulder with one plunge of the knife.'

'All that appears to me incontestable,' was my answer; 'but I would rather hope that two hunters such as you will not miss your tiger. For my part, I shall hunt, as you call it, with my hands in my pockets; that will be more original.'

Failing the armour of sheep-skins, the hunter urged me to take the knife, which I accepted. The two associates then primed their rifles, and we waited without exchanging a word. The lower part of the forest was now in profound darkness, while the little space around the fountain was brilliantly illuminated. We were sheltered by the drooping branches of a large mangrove, forming a kind of natural arch. Twenty paces in front reclined the colt, whose instinct was to be the hunters' guide. Presently I saw the animal raise its head with evident signs of uneasiness, which were soon after succeeded by broken cries of terror, and efforts to escape from its fastenings. These attempts being useless, it remained trembling in every limb: a breath of terror seemed to pervade the atmosphere. All at once a cavernous roar from the neighbouring heights pealed in echoes through the woods; the colt hid its head in the grass. A deep silence followed: the two hunters crept from the shelter, and I heard the double click as they cocked their rifles.

An instant after, a terrible roar again burst upon our ears: a form of light colour darted through the air upon the colt, which had crouched down in terror: there was a noise of crashing bones, followed instantaneously by the report of Bermudes's rifle.

'Your knife!' he cried to his companion, who was preparing to fire. 'Look up; that is for you!'

I turned my eyes in the direction indicated by Matasiete, as he took the Canadian's knife. High up among the branches of the cedar I saw two large eyeballs shining like burning coals, watching all our movements: it was the second jaguar, whose tail was lashing the foliage, and beating off the dried moss from the branches in showers. The Canadian stood motionless, with his eye fixed upon the two fierce-gleaming lights in the tree. Meantime, the wounded jaguar sprang at one leap close to Bermudes, where the moonlight shewed the furious animal. The blood was streaming from one of his legs, shattered by the ball. Collecting himself for a last rush, the animal lowered his head, beat the air, and howled in fury; his blazing eyes seemed to expand to twice their ordinary size. Bermudes stood, self-possessed, on the defensive, holding his knife forwards. At length the tiger leaped; but his muscles were weakened by the wound, and the hunter, stepping aside, buried his knife in the monster's heart as he fell: there was a terrible yell—a struggle of agony—and then all was over.

'Whether or no,' exclaimed the brave Matasiete, 'there is a skin badly torn, to say nothing of my own,' at the same time shewing his arm lacerated by a long gash. He had scarcely finished, when a second roar was heard in the direction of the cedar: it was answered by the report of a rifle: a noise of rending branches, followed by a heavy fall, announced the skill of a practised marksman. The Canadian had aimed between the glowing eyes. When the two hunters, going round to the other side of the spring, had found the body, their shouts of triumph gave me to understand that the Canadian's accurate eye had not been deceived. It was not without a feeling of compassion that

I approached another victim of the slayers and slain—the dead colt. The poor animal lay stretched upon the grass; a bleeding wound at the back of the head, and another on its nose, shewed where the tiger's claws had fallen; the complete fracture of the vertebræ of the neck proved death to have been instantaneous. Already cold and rigid, the first jaguar lay near: I measured it with my eye, but at a distance, when the two others arrived dragging the female, whose skull had been shattered by the ball: this time, at least, the skin was unbroken.

Bermudes complimented me on my courage in what he persisted in calling tiger-hunting. I, however, disclaimed anything like bravery. The hunters seemed disposed to pass the night near the booty which they had so well earned; and preferring the open air to my close chamber, I agreed to keep them company if they would light a fire. My wish was soon gratified; we stretched ourselves on the moss near the blazing wood, and before many minutes had elapsed, were sound asleep.

On awaking the next morning, I found the two companions with their shirt sleeves tucked up to the elbow, and stained arms, busily engaged in flaying the two jaguars. When they had completed their task, which was performed with the dexterity acquired by long practice in similar operations, they threw the skins over their shoulders, and we all took the way to our original quarters, where our arrival was hailed with prolonged congratulations. Bermudes and his comrade received the usual reward of ten dollars for each skin; and the 'Killer-of-Seven' would now have to add another number to his surname.

THE OLD MAID FROM PRINCIPLE.

'Let him deny himself.'

'Cousin Lucy, when will you tell me why you are not married? You often promised to tell me when I was a little older. I am now nearly sixteen: is not that old enough?'

'Yes, love,' replied the mild-eyed Cousin Lucy; 'you are, I think, old enough, and thoughtful enough to apply my tale to useful purpose; so I will defer it no longer. Let us go to my favourite seat under the fir-trees, and we can then watch the sun set, while you listen to the old maid's prosy story. Come, the shadows are stretching nearly across the lawn, and I have the history of a life to relate.'

The fir-trees crowned the brow of a gentle western declivity, along which ran the miniature moat and palisades which formed the boundary of the pleasant garden. The slope below was rich with waving corn, mellowing

in the breath of a warm July. Farther still, the 'hedge-row elms' were here gathered into majestic groups, and there stretched away in long irregular lines, enclosing fields of every hue, presented by a rich country in high cultivation. There was the bright tender green where the young grass was springing up after the hay-harvest, the duskier shade of the pastures, the yellow barley, the feathery oats, and the sombre bean-field, all studded here and there with patches of the brilliant scarlet poppy. Bounding the prospect on the right might be seen a portion of the park-like meadow belonging to the house, dotted with enormous oaks and beeches; while on the extreme left lay a wide extent of moorland, glowing with flowering gorse and heath flowers. The rich landscape swept away, diversified by an occasional village spire, a mass of darker wood, the picturesque gable of some old farmhouse, or the silvery windings of a small river, and was terminated by a chain of lofty hills, towards which the sun was just sinking in a blaze of golden and crimson light. The 'smell of dairy-farms' mingled with the thousand luscious perfumes that hang about the air of a summer evening; and the ear was soothed by the cooing of the wood-pigeons, the tinkling of sheep-bells from the heath, the evening song of the black-bird, and the ceaseless murmur of a hidden brook. A rustic bench of unbarked wood extended beneath the ancient firs, and on this Cousin Lucy and her youthful auditor sat for a while, watching in silence the sunset changes of the gorgeous landscape.

Now, Cousin Lucy was by no means the venerable personage she seemed to think herself. She was not forty, and looked considerably younger; her complexion was pale and clear; her figure slight and graceful; and although

the usual expression of her face, and her fine full eyes, was thoughtful almost to sadness, a sweet bright smile was ever ready to light them up as she witnessed the enjoyment of those around her.

'There is no romance in my narrative,' she began, after a pause, 'so you must not expect any stirring incidents, flitting ghosts, or mysterious warnings. I have had my trials, it is true; but I have the satisfaction of knowing that my life has been much more useful, and far happier than it would have been had I not borne them with a patient spirit.'

'Well,' exclaimed Margaret, 'it is a comfort to know at the beginning that, whatever troubles and miseries you describe, it will all end happily at last.'

'Not according to the sense you generally give to those words, my wilding,' responded her cousin, caressing the young girl's redundant tresses; 'since that implies that the lovers are married, and live happily all the rest of their lives. My story, remember, is an answer to the question, Why am I an old maid?'

'Yet you seem happy.'

'Nay, I know not seems: I am happy: and there is no happiness equal to that which is inspired by the consciousness of having acted rightly. But your question reminds me that I must begin my story, or night will overtake us before it is ended. You must know that my mother died when I was quite an infant. She had had many children, but of the whole number, only the eldest and the youngest grew up to womanhood. Now, pray observe how many circumstances, arising chiefly from ignorance, conspired to bring my poor mother to her grave at the age of twenty-seven. She was naturally delicate, and this

delicacy was increased by a boarding-school education, where the confined polluted air, the want of exercise, the tight stiff stays, and the unceasing mental exertion, completed the destruction of the little vigour she once possessed. Nevertheless, like a forced flower, she flourished precociously for a time. At sixteen, she was a woman in appearance and manners; and she had only left school a few months, when she married a man as ignorant as herself of the grave error they were committing. Within a year, she gave birth to a daughter. Six years more passed away, each being marked by the birth of a child. I was the last, and, with the exception of my eldest sister, the only one who survived the age of eighteen. All the others sank under some form of consumption, that fell disease to which my mother had a strong constitutional bias. Shortly after my birth, she too shewed symptoms of this disorder, and in a few months she was laid beside her children.'

'Ah, then, I see why you would not marry: you feared that all *your* children might die of consumption?'

'Exactly. But I was not so fortunate as to learn my danger at your early years. In my young days, such subjects as physiology, or anything relating to it, were scouted, even by those who professed liberality, as quite unnecessary, if not improper, in female education. And so, for the want of the merest elementary knowledge of these important sciences, mothers, with the best intentions, bound up their daughters' figures in unyielding web and whalebone, compressed their lungs, distorted their spines, impeded the action of their hearts, shut them safely up from the free breath of nature, taught them assiduously every fashionable accomplishment and every artificial grace, but would have fainted at the vulgarity of a morning run

over a breezy hill, had common-sense ventured to propose such a remedy for the poor creatures' pallid cheeks and wasting forms. And as for reflecting on the effect this false system must have on their children's children, that of course they never did. Women did not often reflect at that time, except upon the characters of their neighbours. It has often struck me as a singular anomaly, that we calculate the extent of land or the amount of money we shall bequeath to our offspring, but never bestow a thought on the *health* they will inherit from us!

'Well, ignorance of such matters was prevalent when my sister, then about eighteen, married a young man of good family, but no wiser than herself. My father rejoiced at the unexceptionable match, and pleased himself with flattering visions of her future welfare. In short, everything seemed to me to smile upon their union, until one evening I happened to overhear a conversation that made a strong impression upon me, though I did not understand it till some years after. Our medical friend, Dr Winter, who had been on the continent for several months, and had only heard of my sister's marriage on the day of his return, was chatting with Miss Rumball, the clergyman's sister, and another lady—the wedding of course being the staple of their discourse.

"It is a great pity," said the doctor with a deep sigh: "her mother died of consumption, and I understand that his family is not free from the same malady. They ought on no account to have married. The children will pay the penalty."

"But there may not be any, you know, doctor," interposed one of the ladies (*not* Miss Rumball, for she, I remember, kept her eyes fixed on the point of her toe, and

looked excessively shocked); "there are many happy marriages without children."

'Miss Rumball here cast a horrified glance first at me and then at them. Mrs Bland stopped short; the doctor shrugged his shoulders, and walked away. I could not imagine why Miss Rumball had checked them, as if they were saying something which it was improper for me to hear; so I stood behind the window-curtain (not very creditable, you will say; and I hope you will not suspect I should do so *now*), that I might hear the remarks of the two ladies when the doctor was gone.

"Singular man!" said Mrs Bland, who was a warm-hearted, weak-headed matron. "Now, for my part, I can see no possible objection to the match; there are youth, wealth, and beauty on both sides."

"Oh, I've no patience!" exclaimed Miss Rumball, indignantly whisking the crumbs off her black silk dress. "It is *dreadful*, it is *dis-gust-ing*, to hear human beings with immortal souls talked of in that way!—actually brought down to the level of the brutes that perish! Dr Winter ought to have been a horse-dealer, or something of that sort, and then he'd have been in his proper element. One would really think, to hear him talk, that there were different kinds of human beings, just as there are of cattle and such things."

"Why, I've heard him say," replied Mrs Bland, "that if we took half as much care to improve our own race as we do to improve our horses and sheep, the doctors would be obliged to turn farmers."

"Pray, my dear friend, don't repeat such things to me. The man is low."

"He is rather indelicate sometimes," said the other,

urbanely siding with indignant virtue; "but then he 's such a clever creature, one must make allowances for his odd little ways."

"Oh, clever! I 've no patience!" exclaimed Miss Rumball.

'For many an hour afterwards did I puzzle my little brain to make out what they had been talking about; but, as I said before, the interpretation came at last.—Six years passed away. My dear sister was blessed, as we thought it, with four sweet children—little fairies like living lilies and roses; but her own health was delicate. But suddenly my whole attention was engrossed by a new object; and the consequence, a new and powerful feeling. This object was a cousin, a nephew of my mother. He was about twenty-two years of age, intellectual, accomplished—in short, a perfect gentleman. He was the only survivor of a large family, and had lived from infancy with his widowed mother in the mildest regions of Italy. Important business at length compelled them to come to England, and it was then that Henry Goring paid his first visit to our quiet home.

'I sometimes smile, and sometimes weep, but oftener both together, when I think how very happy I was for two months after his arrival. Every object seemed to glow with radiant colours; the perfume of the commonest flowers became intoxicating; all the sounds and sights of Nature spoke a new and delightful language. Music was—ah, I must not attempt to describe what music was! A strain that was familiar then, and is mixed up, as it were, with the dream-like recollections of that delightful time, will sometimes return, and wander through my brain for days and nights together, and then I sadly live over again my

former happiness. But that is enough. One day you will know by experience how delightfully such moons as these roll by.

'As yet, no word had been said of our attachment. We had looked into each other's eyes, and read our souls there; and we might have gone on in the same way for two months more, had not Henry been summoned to London upon the business that had brought him from Italy. This drew matters to a crisis. It was just such a lovely evening as this when he first spoke to me of his attachment. It was agreed between us that he should speak to my father the next morning. He did so; and all seemed propitious to our wishes, for my father gave a cordial consent. Another day of bliss, almost too intense for endurance, and then came my first sorrow—the departure of my lover for one whole wearisome week. Well might Moore sing—

"There 's nothing half so sweet in life as love's young dream!"

The first-love of a girl who knows that she loves worthily —the sacred halo which her pure thoughts cast around her ardent feelings—all make of that epoch in life a veritable foretaste of heaven.

'My approaching marriage soon became the talk of the little town. Everybody said what a good match it was. Miss Rumball was quite oracular on the subject; but Dr Winter called upon my father, with a book under his arm, and after being closeted with him for nearly two hours, went away, leaving the book behind him. I met him in the hall: he stopped, looked earnestly at me for a moment; then his eyes filled with tears, and he passed on without speaking. I felt as if under the influence of a coming nightmare. I could do nothing but wander about the

house and gardens, visiting again and again the spots that were rendered sacred by some association with my beloved Henry; and cherishing but one definite idea throughout all the chaos of my feelings, and that was, a firm resolve that no power on earth should prevent my fulfilling the promise I had given him.

'My father remained in his study the whole day. The meals passed away without his appearing; and as I crept up-stairs to bed, I saw, by a ray of light streaming through the keyhole, that he was still watching. The vague sense of approaching evil still hung over me; and as I laid my aching head upon my pillow, the words which I had heard Dr Winter utter respecting my sister's marriage rushed upon my memory, giving to this foreboding a shape of formless yet ghastly terrors. My dream of happiness was at an end!

'You may imagine I did not sleep much that night. In the morning, I hastened down, anxious to see my father. He was in the breakfast-room, and a glance at his soiled dress and disordered hair shewed that he had been up all night. I even thought I could detect the traces of tears on his pale and haggard cheeks. He looked at me as I entered, and then turned away with an expression of keen suffering on his face. In the midst of my agitation, that look made me think of Jephthah and his daughter. He was evidently striving to arrange his words and ideas to open some painful subject, when it occurred to me that, by speaking first, on the clue of my suspicions, I might spare him the agony of plunging a dagger into his poor child's happy heart, and rudely destroying all her air-built castles.

'It is now twenty years since this happened; but I remember the whole scene as vividly as though it had taken place but yesterday. I hung upon my father's neck, and

said in as firm a voice as I could command: "Father, I am prepared to bear anything you may have to tell me, even though it were that I must break my engagement with Henry Goring—provided," I added, "that I am convinced it is a duty."

"Thank God!" he exclaimed, clasping me to his heart; "and thank you too, my beloved child, for sparing me the trial I so much dreaded. I could not have hoped for this fortitude in one so young. My poor Lucy!" and as he said this he held back my face to look at me, "it is a severe trial for you, and one that ought not to have been imposed upon you; but how could I teach you that which I knew not myself? Read this book carefully. Had I been acquainted with it before I married, I should have avoided committing two grievous errors. Your noble conduct gives me the assurance that you will help me to prevent another. May God in heaven bless and reward you!" And so we parted at the untouched breakfast-table.

'With a despairing calmness I shut myself up with that terrible volume, whose pages seemed to be inscribed with my death-warrant. For a while I felt prompted to blind myself to its warnings, and rush madly to the enjoyment of a brief summer-day of happiness. But calmer reason and my father's solemn words prevailed, and I sat down to its perusal. You shall read that book yourself one of these days; it is sufficient for me now to tell you that it explains the laws governing the transmission of qualities, mental and bodily, from parent to child; the immense amount of suffering and disease with which the world is filled in consequence of the frequent disregard of these laws; and how fearfully the sins of those who marry with a strong taint of hereditary disease are visited upon their

children, even to the third and fourth generation. I now understood Miss Rumball's outcry against Dr Winter's indelicacy. She was a good sort of person, but too narrow-minded to perceive that prudery is in general far more indelicate than philosophy.

'Well, love, I must not now stand shivering on the brink of resolution, as I did when the light of that calmly reasoned book was clearing away the mists which had made the valley of the shadow of death look like a paradise. As I read on, I saw clearly the position in which I was placed. The very affection, so ardent, so buoyant in its youthful energy, which I bore to my lover, was enlisted to oppose my marriage with him; for what true love would doom its object to the misery of seeing all his dearest ones sinking into an early tomb? Such at least was not my love; and seeing my path of duty thus strongly marked out before me, I resolved unflinchingly to follow it. But there was something more to be done. He, too, was deeply tainted with the same fell disease, and must therefore be convinced that marriage was forbidden to him. My own grief was nearly forgotten when I thought of this. Could I have borne the burden alone, it would have been comparatively light; but he must share it, and that indeed was bitter. To teach him to love me as a friend—to behold him happily married to some one who might marry—to train up his children, and rejoice over their health and beauty—this would have been to me a dear delight; but, alas! the ban was upon him likewise, and bound us both in the same dreary fate. All that was left me, as I now thought, was sternly to pluck out every hope of happiness from both our hearts, and make the best preparation for the early grave that yawned at our feet.

'I could fill a volume with the thoughts and emotions that passed through my mind during those few hours, but such a recital would be useless. It is enough, that when the sharp conflict was over, and my resolution firmly bent to perform the hard task assigned to me, I felt a degree of tranquil composure that surprised myself, and which arose from a lofty faith that so great a sacrifice to truth and justice would not be made in vain.

'I went into my father's study to concert with him the best means of breaking the subject to Henry. He was dreadfully agitated, but my calmness communicated itself to him; and when I saw that, it stimulated me to still greater efforts of self-control. He appeared astonished and delighted; and the fervent blessing he called down upon me, mingled with praises of what he called my heroic fortitude, reflected back upon me the consolation I had inspired. This was the first-fruits of the faith that sustained me.

'It was agreed that I should not write to Henry immediately, but await the arrival of his next letter, which would give me time to deliberate. Sorrow seldom comes alone: while expecting this letter, we received a summons to my sister's bedside, as her illness had taken an alarming character. Her husband had carried her to Torquay soon after Henry's first arrival, and thither we followed them.

'A description of her illness would add nothing to the usefulness of my narrative, so I will not burden your young mind with it. She died a fortnight after our arrival. There is, however, one painful circumstance which I shall relate, because it bears directly on the principle I am endeavouring to enforce. This was my poor father's sorrow. He saw his daughter die, and that was grief enough; but it was trifling compared with the remorse that gnawed his soul at having

first, by his imprudent marriage, inflicted upon her the enfeebled existence which could not stand the ordinary trials of a mother's life; and having then allowed her to commit the same error, by which her life was probably shortened, and her fatal malady transmitted to her four innocent children. It was no alleviation that he had acted in ignorance; he continually repeated that "he *ought* to have known it." The only drop of comfort in this bitter cup was derived from my patient submission to my own sorrow. To the hour of his death, he never knew what were my real sufferings; for I fortunately possess a good share of self-control, which enabled me to appear more calm than I felt. He did not see the paroxysms of agony which at times prostrated all my energy. They did not last long, however, and became daily of less frequent occurrence, for the resignation which I affected soon began to assume a real existence. I may praise myself at this distance of time, just as old ladies are permitted to boast of their youthful charms, because I have now nothing to do with disinterestedness, heroism, or anything, in fact, but taking care of my own little self, and doing such atoms of service to my fellow-creatures as chance may throw in my way. Then life appeared to me a blank—dull, hopeless, soulless. I was immolated on the altar of unrelenting justice, a sinless but unresisting victim; for the sentence was as distinct as it was righteous, and I could not wish to evade my doom. Gradually a serener mood came over me. First of all, my father required my every care: he would sit for hours plunged in melancholy reverie; and Dr Winter, a wise student of human nature, excited me to redoubled exertions, by awakening fears concerning his mental health—knowing that the surest means of drawing me from my own grief

was to engross my attention with some external object. Under our united care, my father slowly regained his tranquillity; but he had sustained a shock from which he never wholly recovered.

'I had received one letter from Henry Goring, to which I had answered briefly, informing him of my sister's death. This sad event was also an excuse for leaving long unanswered that which he sent in reply, full of gentle and affectionate condolence, but not a word of our expected marriage. But the work was to be done, and delay seemed but to magnify the evil. By Dr Winter's advice, I wrote at first vaguely, hinting that our marriage might be deferred longer than we had anticipated, but without assigning any reason. By return came his answer, assuring me that he would not press our union until my grief had quite subsided. I thought he had not taken the alarm, as we intended he should do; but then followed these words in a postscript: "On reading your letter again, my mind misgives me. Surely there can be no other reason than your late bereavement for any delay of our marriage? For mercy's sake, do not speak to me in riddles, but write immediately, and explain." I did write as he wished, entreating him to read the fatal book, and, divesting himself as much as possible of the trammels of passion, to submit implicitly to the dictates of right and justice.

'On the evening of the following day, as I sat by my father's sofa, watching the first sound sleep which he had enjoyed for many a weary day and night, the door opened hastily, and Henry entered. I suppressed with difficulty the scream that was bursting from my lips, and rising quietly, with a gesture of silence, I took his hand, and led him into the garden.

"Have you read the book?" was my first question.

"I have," he replied.

"Then," said I, "you know what must be our resolution."

'Alas! I had judged too hastily. Either his feelings were stronger than mine, or he was less in the habit of controlling them. I was terrified at the storm my words aroused. The wildest expressions of love were mingled with anger, despair, bitter reproaches, jealousy, vengeance on those who had instigated me to such unnatural conduct: he was indeed shaken by a tornado of all violent emotions. He even declared, poor fellow, that changed affection was the real cause, and that the book and its arguments were only a subterfuge to get rid of him. Very, very dearly and truly did I love him, so you must not be surprised that, unaided and weak as I was, my resolution began to quail. Still I argued, I entreated, I wept; and he did the same, yielding at times to fearful paroxysms of passion. Dreading the effects of such powerful excitement upon his delicate lungs, I strove to calm him; and was about to give him a promise to reconsider my resolve, when his voice became suddenly husky and stifled, a deadly paleness displaced the brilliant flush upon his cheeks, he staggered, and fell upon a garden-seat, near which we had been standing. Believing that he had fainted, I raised his head, when I felt my hand covered with the hot blood that was gushing from his mouth. He had broken a blood-vessel.

'I dared not scream, lest I should arouse my father, whose reason might be wholly unseated by the spectacle that poor Henry then presented. I dared not leave him while I ran to the house; but I supported him in my arms, and looked wildly round for help; and help was at hand. Dr Winter had caught a glimpse of Henry's face as he

rushed through the town in a postchaise, and had followed immediately, to sustain me by his presence and advice, or to be at hand in case of such an accident as had actually happened. He quickly summoned the servants, who, under his direction, removed the poor invalid to the bed which he had occupied a few weeks before in apparent health.

'You may be sure that every imaginable care was lavished upon him that affection and skill could suggest; but I saw from the first that Dr Winter entertained little hope. The intelligence was broken with the utmost care to my father, whose greatest anxiety was on my account; but when he saw me no less tranquil than before (paler, my glass had told me, I could not be), he resigned himself patiently to this new affliction.

'It was now the commencement of autumn; during that season, and the following winter and spring, I was a constant attendant upon Henry Goring. His mother shared with me the duties of nursing him. At first, she treated me with great coldness, I might almost say harshness, because she thought I had sacrificed her son's life and happiness to a fantastic and unnatural whim. But when Henry himself, calmed by suffering, at last recognised the rectitude of my conduct, her manner completely changed, and she became as kind as she had before been stern. At the beginning of the spring our patient seemed to rally; but Dr Winter warned me not to be deluded by appearances. Again he sank; again his mother thought she read returning health in the bright hectic flush; and yet again was she compelled to own that her hopes had been illusory. Amid all these apparent variations, the insidious enemy silently continued its ravages, and ere the spring was quite gone, my poor Henry slept in his grave. He died; and (mark this,

dear Margaret, for it has been my consolation during all the years that have since elapsed) his last words were a blessing on me for clinging to the right.

'I bore his loss with comparative patience, for sorrow had become my familiar companion; and thenceforth I devoted myself wholly to promoting my father's comfort. When he died, which was about six years ago, I became, at the invitation of your kind parents, a member of your family. And here I am still, you see; living very happily, and prepared, but not watching, for death; rendering what services I can to my fellow-creatures, and thereby securing constant pleasure to myself; fearless as to the future; careful of the present, and, above all—and O Margaret, think, think, think of this—free from remorse for the past! And now, do you at last understand,' continued Cousin Lucy, with a gentle smile gleaming through a tear that did not fall, 'why I am an old maid?'

'I do, dear cousin. But may I ask you one or two questions? Will it be painful to you to say something more?'

'Certainly not. It must always be a sad, but can never be a painful subject. Ask as many questions as you like: my object would be ill attained if you did not perfectly understand all that I have said.'

'I think I understand it all; but I wish to know if you did not feel as though you had been the cause of poor Mr Goring's accident? I think *I* should.'

'In the first burst of grief I did; but I was soon convinced that I had done right, and that left no room for self-reproach.'

'And yet you must have been very miserable when you reflected that you could never have a kind husband, or

loving children to comfort you: you who are so fond of children too?'

'For that very reason, how much more miserable should I have been to see those children blighted in their youth; or, dying myself, to know that I left behind me unfortunate beings whom I had endowed with mortal disease! With what tranquillity could I meet death, knowing that my life had been injurious to the world—that I had spread contamination throughout unborn generations—that by my deliberate and premeditated guilt, incurred from intensely selfish motives, I had increased, to the utmost of my power, the mass of human misery? Is not my present lonely life preferable to this?'

'A thousand times!' exclaimed Margaret; 'as your poor sister must have felt. What became of her children?'

'By very great care, they were reared to the age of man and womanhood; and then, one by one, they dropped off, and now all are dead.'

'To what can you attribute your own exemption from this dreadful disease?'

'In the first place, to my having been brought up from my earliest infancy in a very healthful farmhouse; and secondly, to the incessant watch which I keep over my health, thanks to the judicious advice of Dr Winter. In short, to avoid being thrown a sickly burden upon my friends, my existence is one continued course of self-denial. Am I invited to a ball (and you know that I am so sometimes, old maid though I be), I consider whether it would be wiser to go and enjoy myself very much, but at the risk of late hours, heated rooms, cold currents of air, the temptations of dancing, ices, and so on; or to stay quietly at home, read, work, or chat, content with my biscuit and

glass of negus, and go to bed at ten as usual. In the same manner I reduce everything to this question: Which is the wiser? Not from any great love for life, but from a desire to preserve my independence as long as possible. It is, indeed, a duty incumbent on every member of society to preserve his health in the best possible state, for an unhealthy member is a burden instead of a support to the community. Think of this when a little spice of vanity prompts you to wear a pair of pretty thin shoes in dubious weather, instead of less sightly but more substantial old friends. "If I *do* catch cold," whispers vanity, "that will hurt nobody but myself." But vanity would mislead you, as she generally does those who listen to her; and pass over in silence the trouble which an illness would entail upon your family. *You* would be nursed and petted, while not one other person in the house would be exempt from care and anxiety on your account.'

'Thank you, dear Lucy. I have often sinned in that respect quite thoughtlessly, but I will take care to do so no more.'

'If you act up to that resolution, Margaret, I shall see that my warning tale has not been given in vain.—But come; the sun has just set, and I must not wait for the night-dews; thereby, like too many teachers, spoiling a good precept with a bad example.'

THE FALL OF THE JANIZARIES.

'WHO is this that cheapens pistols, when he rather needs a coat of mail?'

On hearing these words, pronounced in a low significant tone, the handsome young soldier turned quickly, and beheld near him two female figures shrouded in dark-blue mantles, and long yashmaks, or veils of white muslin. One of them, however, chanced to be in the very act of adjusting her veil, and thus allowed the yuzbashi, or captain—for such his scarlet pelisse, and the golden star embroidered on his jacket, bespoke him—to catch a glimpse of a youthful face of ravishing beauty. The eyes were fixed on the ground, and a deep blush suffused the rounded cheeks. In another instant the veil was replaced, and the two muffled figures moved on and mingled with the throng, leaving the soldier in a state of extreme astonishment and perplexity.

The principal bazaar of Constantinople presented that day, as usual, a scene of great brilliancy and animation. The numerous arcades, with rows of shops on either hand, were crowded by people of all classes and every race of the East.

Grave Turks, in flowing robes and turbans of various hues, shuffled slowly along, followed by slaves who carried their masters' purchases; Persian and Arab traders, Bedouin chiefs, Armenian merchants, Greek islanders, Arnauts from Albania, Mangrebins from Northern Africa, Turkomans, Khurds, Tartars, and now and then a Frank of some western nation, all added, by their varied costumes, to the picturesque liveliness of the shifting panorama. Women, whose large languishing eyes were alone visible from within the muffled folds of their vestments, flitted incessantly from shop to shop, displaying quite as much fondness as their western sisters for the delightful trouble of bargaining. Rich young Osmanlis, mounted on handsome steeds, with splendid housings of velvet and gold, rode slowly along in the central avenues; and an araba, or carriage, like a huge cage, all lattice-work and gilding, occasionally stopped to allow one or two shrouded figures to issue forth and join the moving throng.

One customary element of variety, however, was wanting, the absence of which excited no little remark. Very few of the Janizaries—whose crimson pelisses, white turbans, red shawl-girdles, and silver-mounted weapons, usually made a conspicuous appearance, as they swaggered through the crowd—were now to be seen. The cause of their absence was no secret. This was the 14th of June 1826, a year and a day memorable in the annals of the Ottoman empire. On the previous day the Grand Vizier Selim Mehmed Pasha, and the celebrated Aga Pasha Hussein, commander of the forces, had assembled the Janizaries in their great square—called the Etmeidan, or 'Place of Meat,' because they there received their daily rations of soup—and had announced to them the new regulations to which they would be required

thenceforth to submit. These regulations, which affected not merely their organisation, but also their pay and perquisites, their dress and their weapons, were all of a nature to be highly distasteful to the members of that lawless and intractable corps. The precautions of the sultan and his ministers, who had previously gained over or put out of the way many of the leading and most dangerous characters, prevented any open expression of feeling. The Janizaries listened in sullen silence, and retired quietly to their kislas, or barracks, when the ceremony was over. The grand vizier beheld this apparent submission with great satisfaction, and congratulated his fellow-minister on the easy success of their master's favourite project. But the aga pasha, better acquainted with the character of his old comrades, shook his head and said: 'It will not be done without much blood.'

This day, the 14th, was appointed for the first drilling of the new companies which were to be drawn from each orta, or regiment, of Janizaries, and placed under Egyptian officers of the army of Mehemet Ali. Those of the corps who were not in the companies were collected either in the Etmeidan, or in their barracks, anxiously discussing the nature and probable effect of the new regulations, and the course to be pursued by the body at the present crisis. Thus it was that very few of them made their appearance that day in the bazaar; and their place was but poorly supplied by the soldiers of the regular troops—the seymens (infantry), topjees (artillery), bostanjees (seraglio-guard), and galionjees (marines), who were present in considerable numbers; and in their ungraceful summer uniforms of white cotton jacket and trousers, with the red cloth fess, or skull-cap, and leathern belt, made anything but a pleasing appearance in the eyes of the Mussulman beholders. Their officers,

however, in their embroidered jackets, and the scarlet mantles which they were allowed to retain, were seen to more advantage. Of this number was the young soldier who has been already mentioned, and who was at once known by his uniform to be a captain of the corps of gunners. Nor did those who were familiar with the various races of the East fail to perceive in the tall and well-set figure, the bold military bearing, the keen blue eye, chestnut locks, and classically moulded head and features, the marks which denoted his Circassian or Georgian blood.

'Who is this that buys a bridle when he more requires a spur?'

The voice was the same that had before struck his ear; and on turning, he again beheld the lovely face, over which the yashmak was just falling. This time the large dark eyes were fixed on him for a moment, with an expression of timid anxiety. The soldier stood and gazed at the retreating forms with still greater astonishment than before. The women were evidently of the higher class; and the words which had been uttered seemed to imply some knowledge of and interest in him. Yet he had been but four months in Constantinople, and of that time the greater part had been spent in his barracks at Tophana, out of which he had hardly an acquaintance. If it were a mere frolic of two laughter-loving damsels, making their sport of the foreign soldier, why did she who partially unveiled her face assume an expression so little akin to mirthfulness? And why did her companion, who, he felt assured, was the one that had spoken, keep her countenance carefully concealed?

While pondering upon this mystery, and pretending to be absorbed in the examination of some Farangee shawls, which were displayed upon the stall of an Armenian merchant, he

caught sight of two muffled figures, whose approach caused his heart to beat with a kind of instinctive presentiment. This time his hand was slightly touched, and a soft voice murmured beside his ear: 'To-night, before the mosque of Raghil Pasha.' The figures passed slowly on, and the soldier followed at a little distance, until he saw them enter a carriage, which immediately drove away. The young man, however, easily kept it in sight until it passed out of the gate of the bazaar. Here a number of Jew porters were seated, waiting to offer their services to any one who might seem to require them. Dropping a coin into the hand of one of them, he said: 'Tell me, Jew, know you whose carriage it was that just now passed the gate?'

'Truly, effendi,' replied the Jew, 'I know it well, for it is one often seen in the bazaar. It is the araba of the Chorbajee Osman, of the seventeenth orta.'

'Osman, a chorbajee* of Janizaries,' said the soldier to himself, as he drew his mantle about him, and moved slowly away. 'I have heard of him as a favourite leader among his comrades, and a violent partisan of the old institutions. But how can I have become known to any in his harem? There is some mystery, and I will not renounce the adventure until I know more. At all events, there can be no harm in spending an hour or two before the mosque of Raghil Pasha.'

Thus meditating, the young man was proceeding in the direction of the Etmeidan, when he encountered a brother-officer, who was hastening rapidly towards the port. 'How, Soujouk Saduk,' said the latter, 'are you not for Tophana? Have you not heard the news?'

* An officer answering nearly to our colonel; the word, however, means literally, 'master of rations,' or soup-distributer.

'What! Have the Janizaries risen?'

'Not yet,' replied the other; 'but the Etmeidan is all in commotion. An Egyptian officer has struck one of the men in his company, and all the rest have thrown down their arms and torn off their new uniforms. The ortas are assembling; and there will be burning and bloodshed, if something is not quickly done to appease them. I am going to inform the topjee bashee.' *

'I will wait and learn more,' returned Saduk, 'and will follow you in a few hours.'

With these words he took leave of his companion, and directed his course through the most unfrequented streets leading towards the mosque of Raghil Pasha, which was beyond the barracks of the Janizaries. It was now sunset, and he made a wide circuit, in order to allow the night to close in before he reached the place of rendezvous. The few persons whom he met on his way hurried by with looks expressive of fear and agitation. He could not doubt that some calamitous event was apprehended; and knowing that an outbreak of the Janizaries was almost always preceded or accompanied by extensive conflagrations, he easily understood the anxiety of the citizens.

On reaching the mosque, he took post in an obscure angle within its shadow, and remained there motionless for two or three hours. At length, just as he was about to quit the spot, with the conviction that he had been the subject of a very annoying practical jest, a veiled female figure hastily approached the mosque, and, after a moment's hesitation, came towards him. Uncovering her face sufficiently to let him perceive that she was an Abyssinian slave,

* Chief or general of the artillery.

the woman inquired: 'Are you the yuzbashi who buys pistols and bridles, as though he were still a rider on the hills of Atteghai?'

'I am he whom you seek,' replied the young man, much surprised at the latter part of the question.

'Then,' continued the negress, 'I am sent to bid you follow me to the presence of a daughter of Atteghai.'

Atteghai is the name which the natives of Circassia give to their country. Saduk at once concluded that some female of his nation, the slave, or perhaps the wife of the Chorbajee Osman, desired to speak with him, for the purpose of making inquiries respecting the friends whom she had left in her native land. With this idea, and excited by the hope of once more seeing the face of the beautiful young houri whom he had met that morning, he bade the messenger lead on without delay. The negress obeyed; and after a walk of some length, through several narrow by-streets, she stopped before a small postern door. Opening this with a key, she introduced him into a low, dark passage, and producing a small lantern from beneath her mantle, directed him to move forward as noiselessly as possible. In this way they passed through several rooms, and at length the slave, drawing aside a curtain, said: 'Enter, effendi, for the mistress awaits you.'

Saduk advanced, and found himself in a small apartment, furnished in a costly and luxurious style. A divan of crimson velvet encircled three sides of it; on this and on the Persian carpet were heaped numerous cushions, covered with red cloth and morocco. The ceiling was painted in fresco; and from the centre hung a lustre of four lights, which illumined the apartment. A veiled figure was seated at the upper end of the room, and a voice—the same that

he had heard in the bazaar—said in Turkish: '*Khosh geldin, Cherkess*' ['You are welcome, Circassian'].

Before he could reply, the veil was drawn aside, and the soldier beheld, to his astonishment, what he would have said was the same face that he had seen in the bazaar, but with the addition of some fifteen or sixteen years to its age. The features and expression were the same. The eye was as large, dark, and languishing; but the sparkle of youth was gone. The cheek was as beautiful in its outline, but without the glow and smoothness of early years. Was it possible that his momentary glimpse could have so much deceived him?

As he stood thus embarrassed, the lady, who seemed rather to enjoy his perplexity, said with a smile, in the Circassian tongue: 'Sit, my friend, while I speak a few words on a subject near to my heart. You are a son of Atteghai, of the family of Soujouk, and the tribe of Natukaitsa. This I have heard from those who have made inquiries respecting you.'

'It is true, lady,' replied the young man, 'however you have learned it.'

'I, too, am a child of Atteghai,' continued his hostess, 'of the tribe of Shegakeh. Yours is a great tribe, and a noble family, but mine is obscure and poor. Yet perchance you may have known the Dar Khaldeer of Malskoy?'

'Unhappily,' replied the young man, 'I know too little of my native land. When I was a boy of fifteen, the Muscov* and Cossacks crossed the Kuban, and ravaged all the neighbouring valleys. The Natukaitsa assembled, and drove them back over the river; but my father and my elder

* Muscovites, or Russians proper.

brother were killed in the battle, and I was wounded, and taken prisoner. They carried me with them to Tcherkask, where my wound was healed; and afterwards I was sent to the military college to receive the education of a Russian officer, in the expectation that I would do them good service in the war against my own country. Seven years I remained at the college and in the Russian army, and at length I was sent to fight against my brethren of Atteghai. But I laughed at the beards of the Muscov, and escaped, and fled to the army of my own people, and fought among them until our enemies were driven once more from the land. But when I returned home, my heart was heavy, for there were none to welcome me. My mother and my brothers were dead, and our uncles had taken or sold our property; so, rather than make ill blood and dissension in the family, I said to myself: "I understand the science and the discipline of the Franks: I will go to Stamboul, and offer myself to the sultan, to serve in his new army. Perhaps I may find favour, and rise to honour, as many others of my countrymen have done." So I came hither four months ago, and presented myself before the padishah; and when he heard my story, and especially that I knew the art of founding cannon, he was greatly pleased, and made me a yuzbashi at once. This is my history, hanoum;* and thus it is that I know so little of my country, and cannot inform you respecting your friends, for which misfortune I am greatly grieved.'

'So be it,' said the fair Circassian with a sigh; 'they are under the protection of Allah. If it be their fate to be well and prosperous, they will be so; and if not, who can alter

* Lady.

it?' With this philosophical reflection her disappointment seemed to be assuaged, for she proceeded in a different tone: 'Tell me, my young friend, did you see my daughter's face in the bazaar when I bade her put aside her yashmak? And did she please you?'

'Was she your daughter?' asked the young man. 'Truly she is a houri—the loveliest of maidens. I have never seen her equal. Happy will be the man who shall possess such a light of his harem!'

'Can you not guess, my friend,' asked the lady with a smile, 'what a mother means when she allows her daughter to uncover her face before a man?'

'Is it for me that you intend this happiness?' asked the youth, at once astonished and delighted. Then, as the thought of his situation occurred to him, he continued in a despondent tone: 'But, alas! what can I say to the chorbajee? What shall I offer as the dowry of his daughter?—I, a poor yuzbashi, with nothing but my mantle and my sabre?'

'You are rich in the favour of the sultan,' replied the lady. 'Think you not that all these matters are known in the harems of Stamboul as well as in your barracks at Tophana? You have the knowledge of Frank arts of war, which the sultan prizes above everything else. In a year, you will be a bin-bashi [a colonel of artillery]; in five years, you will be a bey; in ten years, inshallah [please God], a pasha. I will answer for it, that when your messenger comes to the chorbajee, he will send back words pleasant to your heart. Even now, you can do more to win his friendship than if you could offer him the dowry of a pasha's daughter. You know that the evil advisers who surround the sultan, and pervert his mind, have persuaded him to take away the

ancient privileges of the Janizaries, and alter their laws and customs, which were established by the great and wise Sultan Orkhan, and the holy dervish Hadji Bectash. But the Janizaries are strong, and will maintain their rights in spite of traitors and evil counsellors; and when they meet in all their ortas, with their camp-kettles borne before them, and require the restitution of their old laws and privileges, and demand the heads of their enemies, be assured that they will obtain both the one and the other. But whether they will prevail without much fighting and bloodshed, is another matter. Allah only knows. But this, dear Saduk, is what I would teach you, that you may know how to win the favour of the chorbajee. Of all the troops of the nizam djedid, there are none which are not as dust, as bosh [nothing] in the eyes of the Janizaries, save only the artillery. Most of these, as you know, were formerly Janizaries, or friends of the Janizaries, and will be loath to fight against them. It is their officers alone who are strangers and enemies to the Janizaries. If now there could be found one officer of the topjees—one yuzbashi—who, in the hour of conflict, would say to his men: "Do not fire upon your brethren, the children of Hadji Bectash," they would all obey at the word, and the victory would be secure to the good cause without more blood. Surely, Saduk, dear friend, child of Atteghai,' she said, bending forward, and looking imploringly into his darkening face, 'you would not fire upon my husband—upon the father of my daughter Shereen?'

'This is a snare!' exclaimed the soldier, rising hastily from his seat, and gathering his mantle about him. 'What dust is this that you would have me eat? Shall I dishonour my father's grave? Shall I break my oath to the sultan for a

handsome face? Is this becoming a daughter of Atteghai, to mislead her countryman to disgrace and ruin? Know that for seven years I have carried my life in the hollow of my hand, ready to throw it away at the first warning; but my faith I have kept secure, holding it a thousand times dearer to me than life. This is the law of Atteghai. Have you never heard the history of Mehemet Gherrai, my ancestor, how he gave himself up to death to redeem his word? Farewell, hanoum; I truly believe that your daughter knows nothing of this deception, else she would have been with you. For her sake, and the sake of our common blood, I pardon you this evil design, and may hereafter do you good.'

So saying, before the dame could recover from her confusion, he hastily thrust aside the curtain which concealed the entrance to the room, and seizing the slave by the arm, drew his poniard, and bade her shew him the way to the door. The terrified negress obeyed without hesitation, and Saduk presently found himself in the street. Taking, as near as he could judge, the direction of the port, he hurried forward until he reached the aqueduct of Valens. Here, while he stood concealed in the shadow of an arch, he heard the tramp of a body of men approaching, and presently about a hundred soldiers, in the Janizary uniform, completely armed, passed at a rapid pace within a few feet of him. From the course which they pursued, he had no doubt that their object was to surprise their aga, who was especially obnoxious to them, from the part which he had taken in favour of the new regulations. This, then, was the commencement of the insurrection. As soon as they were out of hearing, he turned and hurried in another direction towards the Ayazmah landing. On arriving, he roused a boatman from his slumbers, and bade him row as rapidly as

possible to Tophana. Twenty minutes brought them thither; and the young man hastened directly to the quarters of his commander, the topjee-bashi. The latter had directed his slaves to awaken him on the arrival of any important intelligence, and Saduk was quickly ordered before him. When the commander heard his statement, he said: 'You bring great news, yuzbashi. This must go directly to the padishah. We will proceed to Beshiktash together in the caïque which brought you hither.—Beybars,' he continued, turning to his orderly in waiting, 'tell Kara Jehennem to make sure that his gun-carriages are in good order, and that his men are stanch. I foresee,' he added, 'a day of bloody work, in which we topjees shall have to bear the heaviest share.'

So saying, he proceeded with Saduk to the landing, and put off in the caïque for Beshiktash. They were half an hour in reaching the palace, where they found that the sultan, as became a sovereign whose empire was trembling in the balance, had been up all night, engaged in close consultation with his ministers. The grand vizier, the mufti, the aga pasha, the Janizary aga, the capudan pasha, and other great officers of state, were present in the council. The topjee-bashi was admitted at once, and Saduk was presently summoned to the council-chamber. He found the sultan sitting on a pile of cushions at the upper end of the apartment, while his ministers stood near him on either hand. Mahmud's dark-blue eyes glittered with vindictive pleasure, and his naturally sallow cheek was flushed with joyful excitement. 'Ha!' he exclaimed, as Saduk approached, and made his military obeisance, 'it is the Cherkess who has brought the good news. You have done well, yuzbashi: it shall not be forgotten. At what hour did you see these dogs of Sheitan, and how many were there of them?'

'Asylum of the world!' replied the Circassian, 'it was shortly after midnight, when your servant saw about a hundred of the rebels, on their way seemingly to the dwelling of his lordship the aga.'

'The curs! the miscreants!' exclaimed Mahmud.—'You did well, aga, to remove your harem in time, for nothing will be sacred to these wretches.—You are all witnesses, pashas, that it is they who have begun the conflict, and not I. This day shall decide who is to govern henceforth in Stamboul—the sultan or the Janizaries. If it be these dogs, I will retire to Asia, and leave the city and the western empire to them. But wherever I am, there I will be king.—Come, pashas, now that the work is commenced, our place is in the city. Let every one perform his part, according to the plan which we have sanctioned.'

With these words the council broke up. The sultan and his principal ministers proceeded immediately to the seraglio, and walked from thence in solemn procession to the imperial mosque of Sultan Ahmed, near the ancient Hippodrome. Here a ceremony of great importance took place. The Sandjak Shereef, or sacred standard of Islam—made, it is said, of the apparel of the Prophet, and only produced on the most momentous occasions—was brought out from the treasury, in which it had lain for fifty years, and set up on the pulpit. Standing beneath it, the sultan, the mufti, and the ulemas—the three heads of the Mohammedan faith—pronounced a solemn anathema upon the rebels, and devoted the whole body of the Janizaries to destruction. The news of this proceeding quickly spread through the city, and produced a decisive effect. The mass of the population had previously been wavering between their devotion to their sovereign and their ancient sympathies for the rebellious

troops. But when the influences of religion were enlisted in favour of the former, there was no longer any hesitation: the great majority of the citizens came forth in a tumultuous throng, and swelled the number of the forces which were advancing from all sides against the insurgents.

The latter, after sacking the palaces of the Janizary aga and the grand vizier, and making an ineffectual assault upon the seraglio, had retired to their square, the Etmeidan; and there having inverted their camp-kettles, according to their usual custom when in a state of revolt, they appointed a deputation to lay before the sultan their final demands—namely, the restoration of all their ancient privileges, and the death of the four ministers whom they considered their chief enemies. But while thus engaged, they neglected, with unaccountable infatuation, to take any precautions against the approach of the various corps of regular troops which were gradually occupying every avenue leading to the Etmeidan. Thus, when the Janizaries received the positive refusal of their demands, together with the alternative of submission or instant destruction, they found themselves hemmed in on all sides by the hated forces of the nizam djedid. A sense of their dangerous position then first seized them, and they made a furious and simultaneous effort to break down the living barriers which enclosed them, with the intention of spreading themselves over the city, and setting fire to it in every quarter.

The principal rush was directed towards a narrow street, occupied by a body of flying artillery, with two guns loaded with grape. The leader of this body was an officer noted for his great size and strength, his swarthy and forbidding countenance, and his relentless determination, all of which traits had procured him the appellation, by which he

was usually known, of Kara Jehennem, or the 'Black Infernal.' It was supposed that the dread and respect which the topjees entertained for him would serve to counteract their well-known sympathies for their former comrades. Thus far the expectation had been fulfilled, for the men had fought with vigour in repelling the attack of the Janizaries upon the seraglio. But now, when the mighty mass came rolling towards them, calling on the sacred names of the Prophet and Hadji Bectash, and shouting to the gunners the watchwords of their ancient fellowship, the hearts of the latter failed them, and they drew suddenly back from their guns, carrying their officers with them. In another moment the pieces would have been in the possession of the insurgents. It was the crisis, if not of the Ottoman empire, at least of the reign of Mahmud. Kara Jehennem, who stood in front of his troops, with his yataghan in one hand and a pistol in the other, when he found himself thus left alone by their retreat, took his resolution with the unhesitating boldness of his character. He shook his sabre, with a terrible imprecation, at his recreant soldiers, and then, springing to one of the guns, fired his pistol over the priming. The Janizaries were close upon the piece when it was discharged, and the effect of the grape upon their dense column was tremendous. The whole mass recoiled in confusion, which the discharge of the second gun, by another hand, turned to a headlong flight.

'*Aferin, Cherkess!*' ['Well done, Circassian!'] exclaimed Kara Jehennem; 'that shot has made you a colonel.—Come on, dogs, cowards, sons of burnt fathers!' he shouted to the topjees. 'Your guns to-day, or the bowstring to-morrow.'

The gunners needed no further menace to make them

return to their duty, and the guns were quickly manned and brought forward to take part in the deadly shower of grape and musketry which was now pouring, with fearful effect, upon the rebels in the Etmeidan. Presently a cry was raised among the latter: 'To the kislas—to the barracks!' The barracks of the Janizaries adjoined the Etmeidan, and the revolted troops, now taking refuge in them, defended themselves there with desperate resolution. The aga pasha sent to inquire of the sultan if he should endeavour once more to make terms with the insurgents before proceeding to the last extremity. The answer was brief and decisive: 'Set fire to the kislas!'

The stern command was unhesitatingly obeyed. In a few moments the barracks were enveloped in flames; but not even the prospect of the dreadful and inevitable death which awaited them could induce the Janizaries to sue for the mercy which they had before rejected, and which they probably felt would now be refused them. They fought on, with the fury of despair, until the greater number were buried in the burning ruins. A portion of them sallied forth, and attempted to cut their way through the line of their enemies. In the conflict which ensued, Kara Jehennem fell with a bullet through his hip. 'Die, dog!' shouted an old chorbajee, rushing towards him with uplifted yataghan; 'down to jehennem, where you belong!'

'Not yet, Uncle Osman,' replied the 'Black Infernal;' and raising himself on his left elbow, he fired his pistol at the Janizary, saying: 'Take that, old friend, for your good wishes.'

The chorbajee stopped suddenly, and struck his hand to his side; then springing like a tiger upon the ranks of the topjees, he cut down two men by successive blows of his

yataghan, and fled swiftly up the street, towards the mosque of Raghil Pasha, closely pursued by a party of the soldiers. All resistance was now at an end, but the work of destruction did not cease. Every Janizary who was found within the walls of Stamboul, whether concerned in the late revolt or not, was put to death without mercy. The bowstring and the Bosphorus completed what the cannon and the sabre had begun; and within twenty-four hours, that formidable body, which for four centuries and a half had been by turns the bulwark and the scourge of the Ottoman empire, was utterly annihilated. Its very name was made accursed, and a heavy penalty denounced upon any one who should utter it. Twenty thousand men are supposed to have perished in consummating this brief but sanguinary revolution, for such its objects and its consequences entitle it to be called.

During the conflict, Saduk had distinguished himself both by his courage and presence of mind. But he felt no disposition to take part in the massacre which followed; and was about to withdraw from the scene, when a sudden recollection flashed upon him, and caused an immediate change of purpose. Collecting a few of his men, he hastened towards the dwelling of the Chorbajee Osman, which he had no difficulty in discovering. He arrived just in time. The old Janizary, mortally wounded by the pistol-shot of Kara Jehennem, had fled to the privacy of his harem to die. In ordinary times, even the executioners of the law do not venture to violate this sacred refuge; but the solemn anathema pronounced upon the rebels removed all scruples of this nature, and Osman's pursuers had just broken into the apartment, where the affrighted women were clustered in speechless horror about the dying man. Saduk's appearance

saved him from the last indignity of the bowstring, and preserved the females from insult. In gratitude for this service, the old chorbajee, by a will pronounced on the spot, as the Moslem law allows, bequeathed to the young man all his wealth, on condition that he continued to extend his protection to Shereen and her mother. This condition being anything but an onerous one, the trust was promptly accepted by the youthful soldier. The will, it is true, as made by a rebel who had forfeited his property by his guilt, would have been of no avail but for the favour of the sultan, who not only confirmed it, but also bestowed upon the Circassian the rank which Kara Jehennem had promised him. Shereen, it is hardly necessary to add, became the wife of the fortunate adventurer; and her mother, with the third of her late husband's ample fortune, was able to fulfil a long-cherished vision, of returning in splendid state to the land of her nativity.

To revert for a moment to the more important subject of our narrative. It has been remarked by many writers, that after the destruction of the Janizaries, the character of Sultan Mahmud seemed to undergo a decided change for the better. His previous reign had been marked by numerous instances of the treachery, cruelty, and rapacity which we have learned to consider inseparable from the nature of oriental despotism. In his after-life he shewed himself not only a liberal legislator—which might proceed from mere selfish policy—but also, on many occasions, a really benevolent, well-meaning ruler; and in spite of the political misfortunes which clouded his later years, he succeeded in securing the affection of the mass of his people, and particularly of the Greek rajahs, and other subject races, to a degree in which no other Turkish sovereign ever possessed

it. If, therefore, in the destruction of the Janizaries, Mahmud shewed himself sanguinary, treacherous, and unrelenting, it is but fair to remember that they themselves, by the character which their fierce, lawless, and bigoted disposition imposed upon his government, had fostered in his mind the very vices from which they afterwards suffered. Viewed in this light, the catastrophe assumes the aspect of a simple moral retribution, and we lose our commiseration for the sufferers in our sense of the justice of the punishment.

THE ARMENIAN LEPER.

TOWARDS the close of one of those long bright sultry days which succeed each other with such unvarying sameness during the summer of Asia Minor, a caravan consisting of a string of some thirty or forty camels defiled slowly through the beautiful vale of St Anne. This magnificent valley, at the entrance of which lies the city of Smyrna, in all the pride of her oriental beauty, is of vast extent, and remarkable for its luxurious vegetation. It stretches many miles into the interior of the country, closed in on all sides by lofty mountains.

The picturesque procession having wound through the last deep ravine, at the steady undeviating pace of the untiring camel, at last emerged into the open country, and came to a halt. It was here that the travellers, who had availed themselves of the protection of the caravan so long as their path was the same with its appointed course, were to separate from their companions, and choose each his track over the wide desolate plain that lay before them. These were chiefly Europeans; and amongst the number were two

young Englishmen, who, having heard that somewhere in this direction the remains of a temple had been lately found, had set out in quest of it, although with only an indefinite idea as to the locality of the ruins.

The tinkling of the camel-bells was scarcely lost in the distance before the adventurers began to bethink themselves of the admonitions they had received from their companions. The night had fallen so suddenly, that it seemed as though the darkness had been absolutely hurled down upon the earth from the depths of the dark-blue sky. No indications of the ruins they sought presented themselves; and what was more, the Smyrniotes had not left them in ignorance that no human habitation existed within a distance of very many miles.

For a time they wandered recklessly on, thinking they would find a couch quite soft enough among the low aromatic shrubs which clothed the desert where they were roaming; but soon the idea of quitting their saddles at all was tacitly given up, notwithstanding the fatigue of their jaded horses; for on all sides, now far off, now so near that they started involuntarily, rose the ominous howling of the beasts of prey, whose numbers render the vicinity of Ephesus so dangerous. They were now greatly at a loss how to proceed, or in what manner to pass the night till the returning day should enable them to shape their course in safety, when suddenly they perceived a faintly twinkling light gleaming on the plain at a short distance before them.

Greatly surprised at a sight so unexpected in this dreary solitude, they gladly hurried towards it, and soon distinguished in the dim starlight the dark outline of a heap of ruins, where broken arches and prostrate columns lay mingling together. They had no doubt that this was the temple

they were in search of; but the light which now appeared to burn steadily in the interior was not so easily accounted for. Advancing to the spot, they dismounted; and having fastened their horses to a pillar, proceeded to explore the ruins, which were of considerable extent, on foot. Guided by the mysterious ray, which brightened as they approached, they at length reached a large rudely constructed aperture, through which they could perceive a small lamp placed in a niche of the wall, which strongly illuminated a very singular chamber. The broken pillars, with large stones brought from some other part of the building, had been so disposed as to form a circular wall, whilst the roof had originally been a part of that of the temple itself: a window and a door facing each other had been fashioned with considerable skill; and a couch, composed of the long leaves of the Indian corn, carefully dried, shewed that it was the habitation of a human being. Directly facing them, the occupant of this strange apartment himself was seated, intently engaged on some absorbing employment, whilst a large book lay open at his side. He was a man seemingly of some fifty years of age, with a mild and pleasing countenance, which was stamped with a peculiarly calm and peaceful expression. His dress was that worn by the Armenians of the lower orders; and his long beard and flowing hair rendered his appearance strikingly picturesque.

The intruders gazed at him for a few minutes, and then advancing, were about to enter the apartment to crave his hospitality for the night. At the sound of their footsteps, the solitary man suddenly started from the ground, and as soon as his eye fell on the strangers, careless of the customary forms of eastern politeness, he held out his hands as though to ward them off, and exclaimed: 'Stand back! At your

peril, come no farther!' He spoke in Italian; and the Englishmen, half-smiling at the idea that he probably took them for robbers, answered in the same language: 'You need not fear; we will not injure you.' A smile, in which there was intense melancholy, passed over the lips of the solitary.

'You will not injure me, I well believe,' he answered in a low sad voice; 'but I should harm you.'

'How!' exclaimed the strangers, instinctively grasping their pistols.

'Not willingly,' continued he. 'There is no danger for you, if you do not touch me; and if you require food and shelter, as I imagine you do, most gladly will I now afford you both. It has been my privilege to prepare a resting-place for travellers benighted like yourselves upon the plain, and it is my greatest joy when they avail themselves of it.'

The Englishmen looked at one another; for the manners and language of the solitary were by no means in accordance with the meanness of his dress and appearance. But he gave them no time for reflection: taking the lamp from the wall, he gathered his garments closely round him, and passing them at as great a distance as he could, said: 'Follow me; for at your peril you must not enter here!' They obeyed; and leading them to the door of a room somewhat similar to that he had quitted, he stood aside, and signed to them to enter. It was furnished with several couches of dried leaves, covered with panther skins; and in the centre stood a small table, roughly constructed of uneven wood. When the travellers had completed their survey, they found that their singular host had retired, leaving the lamp on the threshold; but in a few minutes he reappeared, carrying several vases of fresh water, and a large basket filled with

grapes and other fruits, just gathered—a circumstance which seemed also somewhat unaccountable in the midst of a desert plain. These he placed at the door, and requested them to lift the provisions themselves on the table. As he stooped, the light of the lamp shone full in his face, and the strangers suddenly started with an involuntary feeling of loathing, as they became aware of the strange and deadly whiteness which characterised it. The solitary perceived and understood the movement; he crossed his arms on his breast (an attitude indicative in the East of entire submission), and said calmly. 'Even so; I am a leper.' The travellers had been long enough in the East to be aware of the virulent nature of this dreadful disease, and of the unfailing certainty of its communication by contagion, though the touch by which it is conveyed were only from the garment of the afflicted person. They now, therefore, understood and appreciated the generous precautions of their unhappy host, and complied with his request to sit down and partake of the repast he had provided, whilst he himself sat on the ground at the door, in order to supply any wants which might occur to them.

Whilst availing themselves gladly of the refreshment they so much required, the travellers continued to look with deep interest on the sufferer, seemingly so patient under such a grievous trial; and but for the dread of reawakening his sorrows, they would have inquired into the details of a history that could not fail to be most striking. He was himself, however, the first to open the subject.

'You now understand,' he said, 'why it is that I live among these solitary ruins, an outcast and an exile, not from my country only, but from all mankind. My disease is the incurable leprosy, for which there is no hope till its power

over my mortal body shall be replaced by the corruption of the grave itself. Living, I shall never more know the friendly pressure of a fellow-creature's hand; and dying, my fainting head must not even make its last resting-place on the bosom of a stranger!'

'What a fate!' exclaimed the Englishmen with the accent of pity.

'What a blessed—what a noble fate!' exclaimed the leper enthusiastically, 'if I thereby fulfil the purpose of my creation, as ordained by the All-Wise, whose prerogative alone it is to draw out good from evil! Inglesi, you look surprised to hear the poor forlorn leper speaking thus; but you are young, and your eyes are yet dazzled with the false glitter of this world's perishable joys. If you please, I will tell you the story of my life, and so accomplish a part of the end for which I suffer, if it teach you hereafter, when adversity shall stand upon your threshold, to open wide the door, and welcome to your hearth and home that destroyer of all selfish peace and blind security!' The strangers signified their satisfaction at the proposal; and the leper, drawing as near to them as he could consistently with their safety, began at once to relate his history.

'I am an Armenian by birth, as my dress sufficiently indicates; but you would not guess, from my appearance now, that I was the only child of the richest diamond-merchant of Broussa, a fair Asiatic town, whose name, it may be, you have scarcely ever heard. I was sole heir to all his wealth, and from my earliest infancy I dwelt in his splendid habitation, surrounded by every luxury which a pampered fancy could desire. He died when I was quite a boy, and I remained under the care of an uncle, who, being in fact dependent on me for support, was abundantly careful

to gratify my every wish. This injudicious treatment might have been my ruin, had not my own inclination fortunately led me in a course that saved me from falling into idleness and dissipation. You are aware that we are Christians; the foundations of the Armenian church having been laid in the earliest days of an organised Christianity, and continuing with the same forms and ceremonies to the present day. From the first dawn of my reasoning powers it was my ambition to become a priest; not so much, however, from any particular vocation, as from the certainty that by this means alone I could have an opportunity of gratifying my studious propensities and passionate love of reading. Those only of the young Armenian men who are destined for the church receive any kind of education; and such was my intense desire for knowledge, that when, as a candidate for the priesthood, our libraries (which are extremely ancient) were opened to me, I went far beyond the regular routine of study incumbent on me as such, and devoted my whole time to the pursuit of science and learning. Having acquired all the more important languages of the East—the Sanscrit, Hebrew, and others—I became desirous of gaining also those currently in use in Europe; and for this purpose I made a journey to Italy, for Broussa has little or no connection with the civilised world, and, more than any other town in Asia Minor, has retained its national characteristics and primitive customs. On my return I was admitted to the priesthood; and none could have been less qualified than myself for this high calling, as far as humility and self-denying virtue are requisite for it; but the authoritative power with which it invested me, suited well with my aspiring views; and this, along with my immense wealth and great reputation for learning, soon placed me in such an

elevated position amongst my townsmen, as gratified to the uttermost my worldly ambition and inordinate pride. Ah! my friends, mine was then the leprosy of the soul—far worse than that which now afflicts my mortal body! Whilst the motives of my best actions sprung from no pure source, I avoided all outward contamination with the most haughty and fastidious care. Too slothful, and too greedy of man's applause, to practise asceticism and retirement from the world, I mingled freely with those of my fellow-men who would admire my knowledge and laud my seeming sanctity, whilst I turned away from all the sinful and degraded without an attempt to reclaim them. To such a height did I carry my abhorrence of all things unclean, that I neglected, in consequence, one entire portion of my duties as priest; this was the care of the leper hospital, established at some distance from the town as a refuge for the victims of that fatal malady, to which a retributive justice has now consigned myself. It is true, in flying from the very sight of these miserable beings, and scrupulously avoiding all contact with them, I only obeyed the custom of the country, and the still more universal law of self-preservation—that which actuates yourselves even now; but it is a rule of the creed I professed that a man should give his life for the brethren, if need be; and therefore that was in me a crime which in others was not so. But the hour of reckoning with me was at hand. There is a certain festival in the Armenian church when it is customary that the priest should address the people. This was ever for me a day of exultation and vain display, for then only could I manifest the extent of my knowledge, and startle with the thunders of my eloquence.

'I loved, in my arrogance, to tower over all that kneeling crowd, and shew them what I myself must be in the high

standard of virtue I presented for their example! The last time I performed this duty of my calling, the subject I chose was that of charity; and I found an ample field for my stern disdain and bold comparisons in pointing out to them the wide difference between my own high theories respecting this universal law, and the practical system of its performance in Mohammedan countries, where the master of scores of tortured and crouching slaves erects a hospital for cats, or commands that, after his death, a little reservoir for the rain-water shall be hewn out on his tombstone, that the birds may come and drink. I shewed them how, virtually, they had all renounced the common brotherhood which binds in one the human race; how, daily, their rude hands tore asunder the fraternal tie between man and man! And when I had concluded, I passed with haughty step through the ranks of my humbled listeners, and went out to a grove of cypress near the town, to indulge in the pleasant reflections which arose abundantly from my gratified vanity. I had wandered on for some time, wrapt in thought, when a deep groan, sounding near me, caused me to turn round, and I perceived an unhappy wretch, evidently in great suffering, vainly endeavouring to crawl to a stream that flowed near him, where he might quench his thirst. At a glance—as quickly as you, Inglesi, perceived the malady in me—I saw that he was a leper, and I could easily account for his forlorn situation in this wood, which was near the hospital I have already mentioned. In Asiatic towns, when it is discovered that a man is afflicted with leprosy, especially if it be that species of the disease which is incurable, he becomes, for all his friends and relatives, as one dead, and even those nearest and dearest to him renounce him as utterly as though he were a perfect stranger. Instantly, lest with an hour's

delay the contamination should spread, he is driven forth, not only from house and home, but from all human habitation, and left to find his way, in the first agonies of his complaint, to the only refuge left to him, if he perish not on the road, as many do.

'No sooner did this victim of so terrible a doom distinguish the footstep of a man, than, lifting up his voice, he implored of me, by every sacred name, to find means to give him to drink, for that he was perishing of thirst. But I, heedless of his misery, gathered carefully my robes around me, and fled from his presence with abhorrence. As I did so, suddenly, like a warning voice, I seemed to hear, re-echoed back upon my ear, the words which I myself had spoken but an hour before—the burning words, wherein I shewed how charity meant love, and sternly announced that on every human being that law of love was laid, commanding them to cherish one another even to their own detriment! My friends, a man may hear the exhortations of another, and callously continue in his sins; but when by his own words he is judged, when his better self stands forward to condemn him, his conscience must be seared, more even than mine had been with all my pride and folly, to enable him to remain in obstinacy. I had been about to leave a fellow-creature to perish in the worst of agonies. I paused —I turned—I hesitated. Then it occurred to me that I could, without much peril to myself, enable the sufferer to reach the water's edge, by taking off my scarf, several yards in length, and giving him one end to hold, whilst the other, grasped in my hands, would enable me to drag him to the streamlet. How little I merited the blessings the leper invoked upon my head as he saw me turn! How he seized my girdle with the energy of one whose life depended on

this aid! till slowly, and by toilsome degrees, I drew him to the river's brink. Alas! the effort had so exhausted him, that when there, he was incapable of standing on his feet to descend the bank and drink. I had again turned to leave him. I imagined I could do no more, though I saw that, with the water almost rippling to his feet, he could not obtain one drop for his parched lips. I moved away, despite of his cries. With one desperate effort he threw himself forward. He grasped my robe! I uttered a cry of horror! He seized my hand! Maddened with terror, I tore myself from his grasp. I flung him from me with a violence which sent him rolling backwards amongst the stones; and I fled, as though I were pursued by demons. For the next week, what a life was mine! For ever haunted by one ghastly fear, which embodied all I ever had most dreaded, this much of good was in me even then, that I avoided the personal contact of my friends and servants, lest, even before the disease declared itself, some contagion should spread: and woe is me! never before had the human voice seemed so sweet to me, or my soul so yearned for human sympathy! My heart seemed to swell, even to bursting, with tenderness for those whose friendly hand I dared not touch; and at last the struggle of my feelings was so violent, that I was seized with a raging fever, and became delirious. Inglesi, from that unconsciousness I awoke in the leper hospital! During my illness, the fatal disease communicated to me (as it could not fail to be) by that one touch of the leper's hand had declared itself, and nothing could save me, loved, respected as I had been, from the common doom of my fellow-sufferers: the curse was upon me which for ever separated me from the sympathy of human beings! This only they did for me, in consideration, perhaps, of the

position I had held before—they had me conveyed in safety to the hospital, and did not throw me out on the roadside to perish, as was but too customary; but there they left me, and from that hour I existed no more for all who had known or loved me! And I awoke to know this, to feel it; to shrink, and shudder, and moan, as I thought that henceforward my sole companionship was to be with those loathsome beings whom I had ever avoided with such deep abhorrence. I was one of them! Freely they gathered round me, and touched me, and placed their terrible deformity, in which I shared, before my very eyes! I could not bear it; I was maddened by the sight. One night I made my escape from the hospital, and fled back towards the town where I had dwelt, so blessed with all that earth could give. I well knew I never could regain my position, or the wealth of which my uncle had taken possession, according to the law; but I had a yearning to look on human faces not disfigured by that dreadful taint, and I rushed wildly onward to the gates, with a faint hope that I might enter unperceived. All fled at my approach, as I had fled when *he* implored me; and when I reached the town, I was driven back with curses. I turned to fly, and they pursued me, trying to stone me to death; but I was fired with all the energy of my despair, and escaped far into the desert, where at least if none were near to comfort, there was no leper's hideous face to torture me! It was night: a cloudless heaven was above me, a changeless wilderness around; and I was alone, struggling in a solitude which should be mine eternally, till I went to seek companions among the mouldering dead! Then the full horror of my sentence caused my brain to reel. I flung myself down upon the desert sands; I raved, I wept, and, in my despair, gave way to the most impious thoughts.

'In this mood I lay till morning dawned, and then I rose to look upon the scene around me—a wide, uninterrupted field of burning sand, where the sunbeams revelled in unbroken splendour. One prominent object only met my eye. Close to me grew a tall and graceful palm-tree, towering up against the deep blue sky. I advanced, and passed my arm round the slender stem, for I seemed to have a sort of companionship with it. Like myself, it was a lonely, solitary thing; and surely its existence in that vast desert must be useless, as my own would be henceforward. But as I looked on it, I was struck with wonder and admiration. In my happier days, I had been too much engrossed with my ambitious occupations and absorbing selfishness to have time to study the marvellous perfection displayed in the minutest works of nature, and now I gazed with almost childish delight on the exquisite beauty of every leaf on those long feathery branches, and the perfect adaptation of each delicate fibre or fold of veined bark to the purpose for which it was intended. The tree was thickly laden with fruit; the ripe dates strewed the ground all around me. I easily gathered a sufficient quantity to allay the hunger which had assailed me; and I then perceived that there grew, beneath the protecting shade of the lonely palm, several low bushes of the pitcher plant, whose bright green leaves do so marvellously take a vase-like form, and catch every drop of rain or dew till they have secreted a cool delightful draught, which has saved the life of many a wayworn traveller in the desert. With this I quenched my thirst, and with all my wants thus satisfied, I sat down at the foot of the friendly palm, and fell into deep meditation.

'This fair tree, alone in the desert, whose existence I compared to my own, had abundantly proved that it was

not a thing created in vain, were it but for the relief it had even now afforded to my sufferings; and there was to me something ennobling in the idea, that the germ of the vegetable life might have been placed in the sand, and passed through the various stages of its mysterious growth and fruition, till it came to be this stately palm, with the sole purpose, as ordained by the Creator, of hereafter alleviating the pangs of one of His human creatures. Be this as it might, it was impossible for me not to perceive, as I continued to examine all the perfections of its formation, with eyes opening for the first time to the actual wonders of nature, that the consummate wisdom therein displayed had been exercised for some one fore-determinate purpose, and that this purpose was good. Moreover, that guiding Power which had directed the symmetrical outline of each tiny leaf upon my desert tree, had doubtless in like manner ruled every passing event in the life of reasoning beings. In that case, if all things on earth were tending to the great consummation of the overcoming of evil by good, the individuality even of suffering might well be forgot in the joy of adding our petty efforts to so glorious an end. My past life rose up before me, with its vanity, its utter egotism, its evil, fostered continually in my own breast, and disseminated by my influence on others. Surely thrice welcome the leprosy which had torn me from my stronghold of pride and ambition, and cast me out into the desert, to be alone with—thought! My friends, I will not weary you with all my reflections during the long days when my mind was disciplined in that wilderness, till I learned to comprehend that, by the victory which one individual obtains over the germ of evil in his own bosom, the whole human race is advanced a step. Face to face with Truth, in the immensity of that solitude, I

beheld all things in their real light, and became at last what I now am—most happy in trusting submission.

'After a time, I found that my friendly palm-tree was no longer sufficient for my wants; and besides, I was desirous of so regulating my future life, that I might be enabled, so far as my infirmity would permit, to perform my share in the great duty incumbent on every man—the continual endeavour to benefit his kind. I travelled on for many days, seeking a suitable resting-place as near as might be to the haunts of men—of those for whom I desired to live, though for ever cast out from amongst them. I came at length to this spot, and fancied that it seemed, as it were, prepared as a habitation for me; every facility was here afforded me of providing all that was necessary for my daily wants. The soil was good, and would readily admit of cultivation; and if I could establish a certain degree of communication with a village which lies at no great distance, I might thus obtain the seeds and implements which were requisite to make it yield the fruits you now see before you. I required but little; and I looked forward to a life of solitude without dread. The mosque belonging to the village stood, as those places of worship usually do, at a little distance from the habitations of the people; and I repaired thither next morning, keeping at a distance, where it was not possible I could injure any one. At break of day, as I expected, the muezzin appeared to sound the call to prayers; and when he had concluded, whilst he still stood on the minaret's gallery, I drew near, and addressed him without danger to himself. He willingly entered into the arrangement I proposed, and agreed to bring the provisions then necessary, as well as everything else I required, to a certain stone on the plain, where he was to find in exchange a magnificent

diamond ring that still remained on the hand none had dared to touch. By this means I was enabled to establish myself, with all the comforts you now see around me, in this my home. Years have gone by since then: my vines yield fruit, my garden flourishes, and I am contented, or rather I am most happy, for I have found it possible, Pariah as I am, to link myself to the beloved human race, by the power of conferring benefits. My daily occupation is to weave the long reeds which grow on the banks of the stream into baskets and mats. These I cast on the bosom of the friendly rivulet, and its gentle waters bear them down to the village through which it flows; from thence they are withdrawn by the peasants, who sell them at the neighbouring town; and more than once, when the fructifying rains have delayed their beneficent dews, the produce of my work has saved them from famine.

'Inglesi, you have listened patiently to this my tale, and now you must lie down to rest. To-morrow you return to the world, and it may be that, when you mingle with its dazzling pleasures, and are allured by its vain hopes, you will appreciate them at their true value, remembering how an inward conviction in faith and trust could make a solitary leper thrice blessed in a desert.'

Whether the Englishmen profited by these admonitions, the record sayeth not. Next morning they departed, to take their part in the stir of life again, but the Armenian leper still dwells alone among the ruins of the temple.

THE PRINCE.

UPWARDS of one hundred years ago, there arrived in the town of Rochelle in France a young man, apparently under twenty, of very elegant appearance, but simple and unpretending manners. He was attended, rather than accompanied, by an elderly gray-headed man, who seemed to be neither a domestic nor a parent, but who regarded him with all the respect of the one, and all the careful fondness of the other. The youth, indeed, appeared to require a certain watchful attendance, although surrounded, as one might have imagined, by some prestige which precluded familiarity; for, notwithstanding the cool quiet air supposed to distinguish the great, he was thoughtless and capricious in no ordinary degree, giving way habitually, and without the slightest consideration, to the whim of the moment. Both were plainly dressed. They neither courted nor shunned observation; and the only singularity which distinguished them from ordinary travellers, was their declining to take up their abode in the inn, even for the short period they intended to remain. They at once furnished an apartment for themselves

at a private house, though by no means on an extravagant scale—the whole expense amounting only to twenty pounds; and there they resided together, without making a single acquaintance, very rarely stirring abroad, and living chiefly on shell-fish, but more especially fresh-water crabs—a circumstance that excited some notice, from these delicacies being scarce and dear at Rochelle.

It appeared to be their business here to find a passage for the younger of the two to some foreign country; but in consequence of the hot war with England, vessels did not sail so frequently as usual, and they were for some time disappointed. At length an occasion offered. A small merchantman was about to sail for Martinique; and this appearing to be as good a theatre as any for the study of the world, it was determined that the youth should embrace the opportunity, and sally forth on his course of adventures. The moment of embarkation had nearly arrived, and he was in close conversation with his elderly companion, when the lady of the house inquired what he intended to do with his furniture.

'What do you say?' said the young man absently. 'Oh, the furniture! Keep it,' continued he, with a courteous smile, 'for a remembrance of me.' The lady looked at the other in surprise, but the transaction appeared to make no impression upon him of any kind; and when the interruption was over, he resumed the conversation without remark. This would not, perhaps, have appeared extraordinary in very wealthy people; but the fact was certain, that the youth's funds, on embarking for the West Indies, hardly amounted to more than the value he thus heedlessly gave away: and the two strangers vanished from Rochelle, the one by sea, and the other by land, leaving behind them a grand enigma for the ingenuity of the townspeople.

The youth's reputation in all probability had got on board before him; although the elderly traveller, in recommending him to the captain, could not be prevailed upon to say more than that he was a person of distinction, whose friends would one day shew their gratitude for any services that were rendered him. This, however, was sufficient to insure his being treated with respect; and indeed the dignified manner of the youthful voyager would have extorted respect of itself. In his person he was neither handsome nor tall; his features were common, though sufficiently agreeable; he was of the middle stature; and, in short, he had nothing whatever to distinguish him, but a certain air of high life, and a singularly white and delicate skin, as if he had never, since his birth, been permitted to be visited too roughly even by the winds of heaven.

An incident occurred during the voyage which warmed the respect of the crew into affection. On an alarm of the approach of English cruisers, almost all got into the shallop, to creep along the coast close inshore; and so suddenly was the step taken, that no provisions were thought of. The result was extreme hunger in the boat; which was generously relieved by their passenger, who bought a stock of refreshments from one of the native craft, and distributed them, share and share alike, to all on board. When they returned to the ship, the youth was seized with an illness; and it was remarked, with more of interest than displeasure, that a certain degree of haughtiness mingled with the courtesy with which he received the anxious attentions that were pressed upon him from all quarters. His situation required care and tenderness, but he seemed to shrink from familiarity; till at length the necessities of his condition led him to select, as his attendant, a young man only a few

years older than himself. To this person, whose name was Rhodez, and who was of a respectable family and liberal education, he gradually became attached, and at length bestowed upon him even some portion of his confidence.

Rhodez reported that the stranger was the Count de Tarnaud, the son of a field-marshal; but this was by no means so lofty a dignity as to account for the respect of the confidant, which seemed to increase every day. In fact, the avowal of his rank only made the mystery more dense; till all speculations were at length ended for the time by the appearance of the port of Martinique, blocked up by English cruisers. Under these circumstances, as it was impossible to save ship or cargo, the vessel was abandoned, and all on board took to their boats, and landed on the island in safety, but in total destitution. The count bore his misfortune very coolly, perhaps merely regarding it as one of the adventures he had come to seek; and, followed by Rhodez, went straight to the most respectable house he could find. Here he was received with much kindness by an officer called Duval Ferrol, whose attentions he accepted as a common matter of course; replying slightly and vaguely to his questions, and making himself as comfortable as possible. The host received but small enlightenment from Rhodez, who told all the little the reader already knows, but appeared either unable to proceed farther, or terrified to do so; and the real mystery thus came to be thickened with all kinds of conjectures and exaggerations, each more absurd than the last.

The commandant of the port at length thought it high time for him to enter upon the scene, and, by way of putting beyond all doubt the real rank of the stranger, offered him the use of his house and table. This the count accepted with

much satisfaction; and, always accompanied by Rhodez, as a sort of gentleman attendant, or humble friend, removed at once to the residence of the commandant. It happened on the first day that, when all were sitting down to dinner, he found that he had forgotten his handkerchief, on which Rhodez immediately got up and brought it to him. This incident made the company stare at each other with unspeakable perplexity; for at the time of which we write, a white man waiting upon a white man, in the West Indies, was entirely unheard of. That Rhodez, who knew the customs of the place well, would submit to this dishonour in any ordinary case, was not to be supposed; and again the question recurred, Who was this pretended count?

In the middle of dinner the commandant received a note from Duval Ferrol, the count's former host, containing these words: 'You wish for information relative to the French passenger who lodged with me some days: his signature will furnish more than I am able to give. I enclose you a letter I have just received from him.' The letter contained merely some common words of thanks, written in a schoolboy hand, and in a very bad style; but it was signed 'Est,' not Tarnaud. What could this mean? The commandant secretly despatched a friend to consult some persons better acquainted with the aristocracy than himself; and by the aid of an almanac, these gentlemen at length appeared to master the difficulty. The mysterious stranger could be no other than Hercules Renaud d'Est, hereditary Prince of Modena, and brother of the Duchess de Penthièvre!

Although this, for the present, was only a conjecture, it so happened that they had the means of verifying it; for there were two persons among them (one a brother-in-law of the commandant) who knew the prince by sight. In the

evening, therefore—for they would not intrude earlier upon the dinner-party—they all repaired to the commandant's house; and there his brother-in-law had no sooner cast his eyes upon the illustrious guest, than he pronounced him to be the duke. Even this, however, would not have been conclusive testimony, for the witness was reported to be so much averse to speaking truth, that he never did so, even when drunk; but he was supported by the other officer, and the affair was decided. By-and-by a flourish of bugles was heard without, and the brother-in-law and his friends, who had been pushing the decanters about the whole afternoon, while waiting till it should be time for the visit, drank, with loud cheers, to the health of Hercules Renaud d'Est, hereditary Prince of Modena. The stranger was confounded by this scene. He had probably signed 'Est' inadvertently, and the unexpected consequences filled him for a time with vexation and haughty displeasure.

The blockade of the English became in the meantime more and more strict, till it threatened at length to produce actual starvation. Supplies could be obtained only from Curaçao and St Eustatius, and these, at the best, would have been scanty and expensive, even if they had not to pass through the hands of men who took the opportunity of preying upon the public misery. The chief of the monopolists was the governor of the Windward Islands himself, the Marquis de Caylus, who resided at Martinique, and the derangement of whose private affairs had led to this contravention of his official duty. The discontent of the inhabitants became alarming; and as famine approached nearer and nearer, it assumed the aspect almost of insurrection. The presence of a reigning prince at this juncture was opportune; and the commandant, who hated the

governor, entreated him to consecrate the cause of the people by becoming the head of the party. Our young paladin, we have seen, was humane, generous, thoughtless of consequences; and he was not long, therefore, of suffering himself to be prevailed upon to lend his countenance to the efforts of patriotism. He swore to put an end to the villainy of the monopolists; and declared that, in the event of the English landing, he would himself lead on the inhabitants to repulse them. Such speeches had a great effect, for the name of prince is associated with ideas of loyalty; and the people of Martinique came to think it their duty to be loyal to the Duke of Modena, since that potentate happened, by whatever extraordinary chance it occurred, to find himself in the West Indies.

The Marquis de Caylus now began to feel somewhat uneasy at Fort St Pierre, and despatched an order to the commandant to send him his unruly guest. The commandant, however, suggested that he could by no means take such a liberty, since the individual in question was assuredly the hereditary Prince of Modena; and the marquis therefore addressed a letter to the Count de Tarnaud, inviting him to repair to his residence. 'To him,' replied his highness, 'I am Hercules Renaud d'Est, although the Count de Tarnaud to the rest of the world. If he desires to see me, let him repair to Fort Royal, which is half-way, and in four or five days I shall be there.' The officers who brought the missive reported the stranger's resemblance to the Duchess de Penthièvre, and the governor's doubts began to give way. He set out for Fort Royal as commanded; but his heart failed him, and he turned back. The prince, not finding him there, proceeded to Fort St Pierre, accompanied by a retinue of gentlemen, and was seen by the governor from his

windows; upon which the latter, exclaiming that he was the very image of his mother and sister, left the place in a panic, and retired to Fort Royal.

The Rubicon was now passed. It would be affectation to repudiate longer a rank which had been assigned to him without any agency of his own, and the Prince of Modena assumed his ancestral state, and appointed his household. The Marquis d'Eraguy had the honour of being nominated his grand equerry; Duval Ferrol, his first host on the island, became one of his gentlemen attendants; and the faithful Rhodez exulted in the office of page. He held a court, and gave formal audiences; and his levees were sedulously attended, not only by all who had complaints to make against the existing government, but by many of the officers of the administration, who conceived it politic to seek the protection of a hereditary prince. His palace was at first the convent of the Jesuits; but this excited so much the jealousy of the Dominicans, that after a time he removed to the establishment of the latter, where he was treated, if possible, with still more distinction. A table of thirty covers was laid for him and his guests every day. His dinner was a great spectacle, which passed on to the sound of trumpets; and as it was the custom to admit the people into the hall on the occasion, it became necessary to have the table defended by strong rails from the pressure of the crowd.

Under this régime, St Peter's presented the aspect of a vast theatre. Serious business was no more thought of; the wheels of government stood still; money once more came into active circulation; provisions, liberated from the chains of monopoly, arrived from all quarters; eating, drinking, and dancing were the order of the day; and, as if fortune

had determined to signalise the reign, as it may be called, of the duke by her choicest triumphs, the news of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle came over the Atlantic to complete the general intoxication.

It may be supposed that the character of the royal adventurer was severely tested during a period of more brilliant fortune than he could have enjoyed on the ducal throne. We must remember, however, that he was a mere lad, exposed to temptation of every kind, and not condemn too severely the vagaries into which he was led by his wild and restless spirit. Accustomed to indulgence, as it appeared, from his cradle, he never knew what it was to repress a wish, or even feel a doubt; and he plunged madly into all the excesses of the time and place, and led the way in dissipation as zealously as he had offered to head the ranks of war. But the strange thing was, that even in his wildest moments he never forgot his *rank*. Neither the madness of wine, nor the witcheries of beauty, ever betrayed him into laying aside, for an instant, the dignity of the prince; and thus it was, that even the companions of his most unguarded hours continued to look upon him with a kind of awe.

The hospitality of the monks, it will be seen, was highly convenient for the wandering sovereign, who had landed in Martinique without a coin in his pocket; but soon he had abundance of money from a more legitimate source. It chanced that the Duke de Penthièvre possessed considerable property in the island; and his agent was of course not the last to present himself at the court of his constituent's brother-in-law. A gracious reception, and a half-hour's conversation in private, were sufficient to determine the honest man to do his duty to the family; and the Penthièvre funds were freely placed at the disposal of the young prince. This

circumstance completely shut the mouths of the few malcontents who still affected to doubt his rank; for the agent was a prudent and cautious man, well acquainted with the affairs and connections of the house, and would never have taken such a step except from absolute conviction. The malcontents, besides, could not fail to see that the money was not intrusted to unworthy hands. An impostor would either have squandered the treasure in mad extravagance, or have hoarded it against the time when he might think it necessary to decamp; but the Duke of Modena was neither careful of money nor profuse, spending just what was proper and liberal in his station, but nothing more. The doubters could not have been strengthened in their unbelief even by the consideration that on so remote a stage it was possible for an impostor to strut his little hour undiscovered, for he was always most anxious to meet everybody who came from Europe; and independently of the two gentlemen who had already recognised his person, a third, more recently arrived, recollected having seen him the year before at Venice. And the occasion was somewhat remarkable; for his highness, in a frolic, had broken in a shop glass articles to the amount of £1500, which he afterwards paid for. Was it wonderful that so wild a youth had taken the fancy to come to Martinique?

Wildnesses of this kind, however, were now over, for he was here in the school of the world. His European education had only been begun, though begun on a princely scale. He possessed a smattering of half-a-dozen different sciences; he spoke, though indifferently, several languages besides his own, and understood a very little Latin. His drawing was better than his writing; he was a capital horseman; and, more than all, notwithstanding his flightiness, he had a great

fund of natural good sense and precision of thought. If to this we add the most absolute self-possession, and a serene tranquillity of manner which nothing could disturb, it will be felt that, both in his merits and defects, Hercules Renaud d'Est was every inch a prince.

The prince wrote to his family; and the governor, on his part, despatched a messenger to Europe to relate the extraordinary circumstances that had occurred, and demand instructions as to how the Duke of Modena should be treated. Six months had flowed past, and no answer was received by either. The political crisis in the meantime had gone by, and the inhabitants of Martinique began to find the residence of their royal guest somewhat expensive. The prince himself, after having spent 50,000 crowns of the Penthièvre funds, at last grew weary of his adventure; and in another month he hoisted an admiral's flag in a merchant ship, and, saluted by the cannon of the fort, took his departure for Portugal, with all his household, an almoner, and the king's physician at the colony.

Immediately on his back being turned, the long-expected courier arrived, bringing an order to the governor for the arrest of the stranger! By the same vessel the agent of the Duke de Penthièvre received a severe reprimand for his want of caution in allowing himself to be fleeced of so large a sum; the duke, however, in consideration of all the circumstances, retaining him in his employment, and consenting to share the loss. Both these communications were very extraordinary. The order for the arrest, after a delay of six months, and presented only when the prince had left the island, appeared to indicate that the whole affair had been nothing more than a youthful frolic; and this seemed so fully confirmed by the otherwise unaccountable good

nature of the duke, that public opinion ran stronger than ever in favour of the young knight-errant.

This personage in due time arrived at Faro in Portugal, and was there received with a salute of artillery. On landing, he demanded to be provided with a courier, to send to his chargé d'affaires at Madrid, and likewise with the means of proceeding with his suite to Seville, where he intended to await the return of his messenger. All was complied with; and the prince, still living on borrowed funds, was the gayest of the gay, drinking, dancing, and making love so vehemently, that he became the envy of all the men, and the admiration of all the women. His entrance into Seville was like a triumph. The windows were crowded as he passed; the principal inhabitants waited upon him to pay their respects; and sumptuous entertainments were prepared for him; all of which he returned with a magnificence conformable to his rank. In the midst of this there came a new order for his arrest.

The prince was astonished, the people indignant, and the women, more especially, furious. He had taken up his abode at the convent of the Dominicans, who protected him for some time, but at length, on the fermentation becoming serious, consented to deliver him up to the authorities, provided this could be done without bloodshed. One attempt to take him was defeated by the courage of the youth, who defended himself with his sword; but at length a burly monk, who was accustomed to wait upon him at table, clasped his arms round him one day as he sat at dinner, and held him till the alguazils, rushing into the room, took him prisoner.

He was at first thrown into a dungeon, and strongly ironed; but the next day, for no reason that could be

imagined—for he had haughtily refused to answer all interrogations—he was released from his irons, and lodged in the best apartment in the prison. The persons composing his retinue, however, were treated with less ceremony; they were examined regarding a supposed conspiracy to seize the island of Martinique, and banished from the dominions of Spain. The prince himself was ultimately condemned to the galleys.

When the time came for his removal to Cadiz, it appears that apprehensions were entertained of a commotion in his favour. The whole garrison of Seville was under arms, and the prince, supported by the captain and lieutenant, entered a carriage drawn by six mules, and proceeded through the town between two ranks of infantry which lined the streets. Opinions were still divided as to his pretensions to the ducal throne, and bets to the amount of 60,000 piastres depended upon the question. The extraordinary thing was, that there came an order from the court to prohibit the laying of wagers; and, more extraordinary still, the messengers sent off by those who had money at stake, to decide the whole matter by finding him whom they supposed to be the real duke, were unsuccessful. No Duke of Modena was to be found in Italy!

Arrived at Cadiz, the prince was conducted to the fort of La Caragna, the commandant of which was instructed to treat him with *politeness;* and here he lived very comfortably for a time, busying himself in making such presents as the sale of his effects enabled him to afford, to those from whom he had received kindness in the course of his strange adventures. But the romance was at an end: the real Duke of Modena had been at length found; and our paladin, growing tired of a life without notoriety and without excitement, made his escape.

Soon after this, the captain of a merchantman which had come to anchor in the roads of Gibraltar went on shore, and reported to the governor that he had on board the individual who was so well known by the title of the Prince of Modena. 'Let him beware of landing, then,' replied the governor, 'or I shall apprehend him immediately!' The captain looked perplexed. He returned slowly to his ship, weighed anchor, and set sail; and with him disappeared for ever this singular young man, as completely as a bubble vanishes from the face of the sea.

There are few of the monstrosities of romance which equal in wildness and improbability the above transcript from real life. The series of coincidences which favoured the imposture, and the numerous mistakes as to the personal identity of the hero, committed by persons who knew, or affected to know, the real prince, seem little less than miraculous; while the moderation of the Duke de Penthièvre, and the tenderness exhibited by the court towards a convicted felon, throw around the whole story a romantic mystery, which, at this distance of time, it would be vain to attempt to penetrate.

MARIA LA FANTESCA.

TOWARDS the close of the seventeenth century there dwelt in Rome a young girl, whose singular history rendered her an object of universal interest. Her surname was never known, but she was commonly called Maria la Fantesca, or Maria the Servant-girl. She was born in one of the villages near Rome, and at an early age was placed by her parents, who were very poor, in the family of an eminent sculptor. Before she came of age, she had conceived such an admiration of her master's works, that she formed the bold resolution of devoting herself to the study of art; pursuing it at first in secret, but cherishing a hope of one day attaining public success. Maria confided her intentions to an artist who frequently visited her master's studio, and begged of him to give her secretly a few lessons in drawing and modelling: the artist not only granted her request, but induced his friend Dr Corona to aid him in the instruction of the enthusiastic girl.

This first step gained, Maria devoted every moment she

could snatch from her household duties to modelling and drawing: she was never idle. To execute something worthy of her master's praise, was the highest object of her ambition. Life had now new charms for her: if her resolution at any time wavered, or she felt overcome by the difficulties of her task, Maria used to go secretly to the Vatican, and there, surrounded by the great works of ancient art, her enthusiasm was speedily rekindled, and her courage revived. She would pass hours together in looking at her favourite statues, and gazing upon them until she felt her mind thoroughly imbued with their beauty. These were her lessons. She was determined not to fail; and as if aware that in this resolution she possessed the surest guarantee of success, she laboured unremittingly, and overcame obstacles which would have daunted a less hopeful spirit.

The pursuit of sculpture as an art has rarely been attempted by a woman, and difficulties met Maria at every step; still she allowed nothing to turn her from her purpose. She listened eagerly to every word of advice and instruction which she chanced to overhear her master giving to his pupils, and treasured all up in her memory; and afterwards, in her quiet hours, when she had time for reflection, or to pursue her studies, she turned this instruction to good account.

By this steady pursuit of her object, by her perseverance, and a careful economy of time, Maria made a progress that astonished the friends who were in her secret. At length she set to work upon a statue, on which she had bestowed long and anxious thought, and which she hoped to render worthy of public exhibition. She told no one of her project; and it was only in hours stolen from her daily duties, or, more frequently, from her night's rest, that she

could prosecute her work. Two years did the energetic girl labour on in secret, unaided even by the voice of encouragement, but supported by her own enthusiasm. At length the statue stood before her, a finished work! It was a statue of Minerva; and although by no means faultless in execution, its deficiencies in finish and proportion were compensated by a grandeur in the attitude and general expression, and a beauty in the features, which seemed almost inspired. The statue was completed; the last finishing touches were given to it; and Maria had it secretly conveyed to the hall in which the exhibition was to take place. The judges appointed to award the prize to the successful candidate were assembled; crowds flocked from all parts of Rome to the Capitol, and every seat was occupied. All were eagerly discussing the merits of the various works of art exhibited.

It so happened that Maria's master was president on this occasion, and it consequently fell to him to crown with a wreath of laurel the prize work of art selected by the judges. Maria, in her simple servant's dress, unnoticed and unsuspected, had followed in the crowd, and taken her seat in the gallery. With a beating heart she sat watching intently the progress of the ceremony. There was a breathless silence, and the opinion of the judges was at length declared—it was unanimous. Reader, can you imagine the feeling of mingled rapture and amazement which overpowered poor Maria, when she saw her master step forward, and, amidst the deafening applause of the assembled multitude, place the laurel crown upon the head of her Minerva! On every side she heard the praises of the statue, and of the talents of the unknown artist.

Maria returned home, silent and alone; and here a still

greater joy, if possible, awaited her. She went back to her ordinary duties, but her face was flushed, and her whole frame fevered with excitement. Presently her master's bell rang, and she obeyed the summons: but when she now entered the room, she could control her emotions no longer. She fell on her knees, and bursting into tears, confessed her secret. Her master looked at her in silent astonishment and admiration, then raising her up, he overpowered her with questions as to the means by which she had attained such proficiency in an art so entirely removed from her sphere of life. Maria humbly and modestly related her story. She told him of the irrepressible desire which first determined her to be a sculptor—the study and labour she had devoted to the art—and all the hopes, the fears, and difficulties which she met and overcame. The good old man listened with deep interest; and embracing the poor girl affectionately, he promised to adopt her as his daughter and his pupil, assuring her that such a beginning augured the brightest success.

Maria's story was soon known throughout Rome, and a universal feeling of interest was awakened in the fate of the self-taught artist. She was courted and flattered, and received into the highest circles, all vying to bestow the greatest honour on Maria la Fantesca; but her joy was no longer the same as that which had animated her in her secret hours of study, when, unknown and uncared for, she laboured on, stimulated only by the love of her pursuit, and the sole companion of her hopes and aspirations. Then, indeed, she had looked forward with rapture; she now looked backward on the past with satisfaction, but not wholly without regret.

Maria's triumph was of short duration: the brilliant star

shone but for a moment, and then vanished. Whilst her fame was the universal theme in society at Rome, she was fast fading away. Excitement and over-study had undermined her health, and she fell a victim to a rapid decline. The poor girl had plucked the flower of her hopes, but only to see it wither in her grasp.

THE END.

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